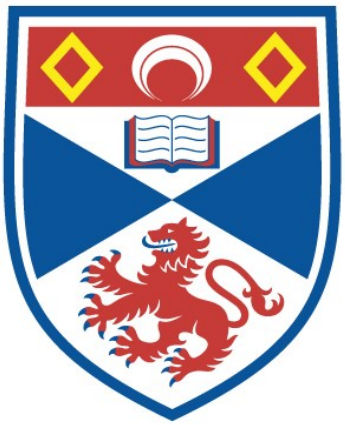
THE STRUGGLE WITH THE DOCETIC TENDENCY IN TWENTIETH CENTURY BRITISH CHRISTOLOGY

Daniel Bayne

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



1953

THE STRUGGLE WITH THE DOCETIC TENDENCY IN TWENTIETH CENTURY BRITISH CHRISTOLOGY

Being a Thesis presented by

The Reverend Daniel Bayne Wessler, B.Sc.(law), B.D.,

to the University of St. Andrews

in application for the degree of Ph.D.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

ms
1,511

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the following Thesis is based on the results of Research carried out by me; that the Thesis is my own composition; and that it has not previously been presented for a Higher Degree.

The Research was carried out in St. Mary's College, The University, St. Andrews.

Signed: _____

at the University of St. Andrews

September, 1953.

CERTIFICATE

I certify that Daniel Bayne Wessler has spent nine terms in Research on the subject, The Struggle With The Docetic Tendency in Twentieth Century British Christology; that he has fulfilled the conditions of Ordinance No. 16 (St. Andrews); and that he is qualified to submit the accompanying Thesis in application for the degree of Ph.D.

Signed: _____, Professor,

Supervisor.

ACADEMIC CAREER

1942 - Matriculated in the University of Oregon, U.S.A.

1943 - Matriculated in the University of California at Los Angeles, U.S.A.

1946 - Matriculated in the University of Oregon College of Law and followed a course leading to the degree B.Sc.(law).

1948 - Matriculated in the San Francisco Theological Seminary, U.S.A., and followed a course leading to the degree B.D.

1951 - Matriculated in the University of St. Andrews and commenced research the record of which is herewith submitted as a Ph.D. Thesis.

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE STRUGGLE WITH THE DOCETIC TENDENCY IN TWENTIETH CENTURY BRITISH CHRISTOLOGY.

I. The definition of docetic tendency..... Page 1

II. The beginnings of the docetic tendency in Christology..... 3

The New Testament concern with the docetic tendency..... 5

The docetic tendency in Gnosticism..... 10

Early docetic writings..... 13

The Patristic writers against the docetic heresy 16

III. The continuation of the docetic tendency in the first four General Councils of the Church..... 19

The First General Council, Nicaea, A.D. 325..... 20

The Second General Council, Constantinople, A.D. 381..... 22

The Third General Council, Ephesus, A.D. 431.... 23

The Fourth General Council, Chalcedon, A.D. 451 24

IV. The Christological problem at the beginning of the Twentieth Century: The Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith..... 25

CHAPTER II. THE APPEARANCES OF THE DOCETIC TENDENCY IN THE EXPLANATION OF MIRACLE.

Introduction..... 29

I. Some critical attitudes toward the presence of the miraculous in the Gospels..... 31

The critical account of the miraculous which explains the Gospel story and the historical event behind it in terms of man's knowledge of the natural order..... 32

The critical approach to the miraculous which explains Gospel Story and Historical Event in terms of an expanding view of miracle..... 38

A critical attitude which explains the appearance of the miraculous in the Gospels in terms of the belief of the early Church which produced the miracle-story..... 43

Some critical accounts of the presence of the miracle-stories in terms of various motives which prompted their inclusion in the Gospels 47

II. Miracle as sign with Messianic significance: a challenge to relate miracle to world-view..... 53

III. Miracle and World-View..... 60

CHAPTER III. THE TEMPTATIONS AND SINLESSNESS OF JESUS IN THEIR RELATION TO THE STRUGGLE WITH THE DOCETIC TENDENCY.

Introduction..... 72

I. The Temptation Stories of the Gospels..... 74

The interpretation of the Gospel narratives of the Temptations in terms of the will, knowledge, and self-consciousness of Jesus..... 78

The interpretation of the Temptations in terms of Messianic Mission..... 81

II. The Christological implications of the Temptations and Sinlessness of Jesus: Some problems and suggestions towards their solution..... 86

III. The Doctrine of the Sinlessness of Jesus: its susceptibility to the docetic tendency..... 103

Two types of answer to the question 'Why was Jesus sinless?'..... 103

1. Answer One: Jesus was sinless as the result of an inherent quality in His nature..... 105

2. Answer Two: The Sinlessness of Jesus was a part of His Atoning Work..... 110

Suggestions for a restatement of the Doctrine of the Sinlessness of Jesus which employs the element of paradox as a safeguard against a docetic tendency..... 114

CHAPTER IV. THE LIMITED KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS AND THE DOCETIC TENDENCY.

Introduction..... 119

I. The legitimacy of the study of the knowledge of Jesus..... 123

The skeptical-reverent attitude towards the study of the knowledge of Jesus: 'Messianic purpose' as a key to the nature of His knowledge 125

The study of the knowledge of Jesus through the correlation of His authority and knowledge.... 129

The study of the knowledge of Jesus as directed by the nature of the Incarnation..... 132

II. Current forms of the discussion of the knowledge of Jesus..... 136

The discussion of the knowledge of Jesus in terms of substance: divine-human; omniscience-limitation..... 137

The discussion of the knowledge of Jesus in terms of relationship: Father-Son; Universal-Particular..... 160

The discussion of the knowledge of Jesus in terms of grace..... 170

CHAPTER V. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST AND THE DOCETIC TENDENCY.

Introduction: the bearing of the Resurrection on the problem of the tendency to docetism..... 184

I. The Person of Christ in the general discussion of the Resurrection..... 193

A priori considerations in the discussion of the Resurrection which may invite a tendency to docetism..... 193

The element of paradox in the discussion of the Resurrection and its relation to the docetic tendency..... 196

II. The Resurrection Body: A factor in the identification of the Crucified with the Risen Christ..... 201

The body as functional in relation to spirit..... 205

The Resurrection Body in relation to the work of God in Christ: the Appearances..... 213

III. The Ascension: deterministic conceptions which tend towards docetism and an introduction to the paradox of the relation of God to His Community..... 217

CHAPTER VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION: THE FORM OF MODERN DOCETISM AND THE PLACE OF PARADOX IN THE STRUGGLE WITH THE DOCETIC TENDENCY.

I. The summary and restatement of the form taken by the tendency to docetism in the explanation of the miraculous in the life of Jesus, His temptations and sinlessness, His knowledge, and His resurrection.... 223

The form of the docetic tendency in the treatment of the miraculous..... 224

The form of the docetic tendency in the treatment of the temptations and sinlessness of Jesus..... 228

The form of the docetic tendency in the treatment of the limited knowledge of Jesus..... 232

The form of the docetic tendency in the treatment of the Resurrection of Jesus..... 237

The common denominator in the struggle with the docetic tendency: 'The Great Divorce'..... 236

II. Conclusion..... 239

The overthrow of determinism through an expanded view of miracle..... 239

The overthrow of determinism through the use of the idea of paradox..... 242

1. Misconceptions about the meaning of paradox 242

2. Paradox defined and applied to the life of Christ..... 245

3. Summary of the relationship of the idea of paradox to the docetic tendency..... 250

Bibliography I. An Introduction to the study of the struggle with the docetic tendency in Twentieth Century British Christology..... 253

Bibliography II. Material for a study of the struggle with the docetic tendency in Twentieth Century British Christology..... 255

Bibliography III. A background for the conclusions in Chapter VI... 263

Chapter I.

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE STRUGGLE WITH THE DOCETIC TENDENCY IN TWENTIETH CENTURY BRITISH CHRISTOLOGY

I. The definition of docetic tendency.

According to Murray's New English Dictionary, the word docetism first appeared in English print during the period 1818-1821 in the form Docetae which was the name attached to a certain early Christian sect. A more detailed use of the word was made in the period 1831-1833 when it appeared with reference to the earliest Gnostics who believed the body of Jesus to be either an optical illusion or something ethereal and impalpable. From this time on its use became more free and in 1846 the form docetic appeared in a description of a view of the Person of Christ which held His body to be exempt from the law of gravity. In 1887, the word docetically appeared in connection with a study of the Resurrection of Christ in which it was stated that Christ actually and not docetically arose in the flesh.[1]

Today it is understood as a technical Christological term which describes a certain attitude toward the humanity of Jesus Christ.

The first and most naive expression of this attitude followed the meaning of the Greek root from which the word is derived, δοκεῖν, to seem or to appear, when it was held that the body of Christ seemed, or appeared, to be real, but was in fact an impalpable presentation before matter-bound men of the divine Christ. Another expression of docetism at

---

[1] J.A.H. Murray, A New English Dictionary 1897, Docetae, Docetic, Docetism, Vol. III, page 567.

an early date was the attitude that although the body of Jesus was materially real, it was nevertheless the Christ-Spirit which inhabited and controlled that body. In either case, the result of the docetic attitude toward the Person of Christ was in effect a denial of the Incarnation and was, perhaps, also a denial of a conscious, individual, human response of faith by Jesus to the will of the Father.[1]

The denial or depreciation of the humanity of Jesus Christ in favour of His divinity has far reaching results in Christological thought and is ubiquitous in appearance. The denial or depreciation of the humanity may appear in a treatment of the power by which Jesus worked miracles, by which He resisted temptations and remained sinless, in a treatment of His obedience to the Father during His suffering, serving, limited, dependent yet glorious life on earth, and it may appear in certain interpretations of the meaning of His Resurrection.

The suggestion that a docetic tendency, a tendency originally confined to a particular view of His earthly body, may also be present in a certain type of interpretation of the Resurrection is to apply docetic tendency with considerable latitude. The fifth chapter of this thesis argues that a docetic tendency is present whenever the Resurrection is so interpreted as to slight the important truth that the life of Jesus in all of its humanity, that life of Jesus as a man, and man as more than the material of this earthly body, was a continuous life from Incarnation,

---

[1] Docetism: "It can be used in a more popular sense to characterize all teaching which denied the reality of the Incarnation, and therefore the reality and completeness of the Lord's humanity. It may also be used more precisely of teaching which assigned to the Lord a merely phantasmal body, maintaining that He has a human body, of flesh and blood, only in appearance." A.E. Brooke, The Johannine Epistles, 1912, page xliv.

through Resurrection, Ascension, and continues as a human life in the Heavenly Session of Christ.

This brief definition of the term docetic tendency has been introduced here in order to show how the meaning of the term can be expanded from that of the original naive docetism to a more sophisticated form in modern theology. It is the purpose of this thesis to show how the term docetic tendency can apply and to find where it may apply in the British Christology of this Century. In order later to show how this application is possible it is necessary first to sketch the story of the docetic tendency during the first five formative centuries of the life of the Christian Faith. These early centuries provide the docetic thoughts and concepts many of which continue to haunt Christology in this present century, for though these concepts are now expressed in more modern language and are phrased according to the spirit of this age they are yet but variations upon the theme built up during the early Christian centuries and reflect that struggle with docetism which has been going on almost from the very beginning of the Faith.

II. The beginnings of the docetic tendency in Christology.

Christianity did not come into the world as the universal answer to the intellectual problems of men. Jesus claimed a high Sonship, He worked signs and wonders, preached Eternal Life, called for Repentance, promised the Forgiveness of Sins, was guided by Love, and yet left men to ponder the problem of the source of evil. And though His life was the perfect union of the human and the divine, He gave no systematic explanation of how the Incarnation took place.

Men of fertile minds inherited the great intellectual problems of the Faith and Irenaeus observed that Christianity provided an atmosphere in which speculation grew like mushrooms.[1] This speculation and argument which brought men's minds to bear upon the essential matters of the Faith forced the Church in time to form doctrine as a safeguard for the Truth, and heresy, through its tendency to isolate certain particulars without consideration of the whole was to become both product and source of the ancient and constant struggle to clarify and preserve pure God's truth.[2]

A recent study in British Theology points out how this isolating tendency applied to the subject of the nature of the Person of Christ: "Each stress [manhood or Godhood] was in itself legitimate, for since Christ is both God and man, no exception can be taken to the theologian who draws out, with particular attention and care, what is the meaning and what is the outcome of either of these great truths. It was only when the interest of the theologian or of the school was focussed on the particular truth in such a way that the reality of the other, equally necessary, truth was obscured, that the danger of what might properly be called heresy became real."[3]

There arose among the early Christians first a legitimate speculation and then the isolation which carried with it the potential of heresy. These isolating speculations brought into sharp relief the evangelical truths toward which the Church must set her mind in order to

---

1 Irenaeus, Adv. Her., I, xxix, 1, with reference to the Gnostics who "have sprung up, and have been manifested like mushrooms growing out of the ground," Ante-Nicene Christian Library, A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, eds., 1870.

2 J.F. Bethune-Baker, The Early History of Christian Doctrine, 7th Ed., 1942, pages 1-8.

3 J.K. Mozley, Some Tendencies in British Theology, 1951, page 86.

produce doctrine. Today, the early heresies are like channel markers, "buoys, which in themselves are empty, but on that very account float on the surface, and are of use to indicate to the mariner where he is not to steer, if he would not run his vessel on the shallows".[1]

There are four sources which give insight into the nature of the docetic tendency at its early stage. First is the concern with this tendency shown in the New Testament, particularly in the Johannine writings. The second is the docetic tendency in Gnosticism. The third source is the docetic teaching itself in such documents as the Gospel of Peter, Pistis Sophia, and the Acts of John. And the fourth source is the work of the early Fathers, especially Irenaeus and Tertullian, who inveighed so heavily against several manifestations of the docetic tendency.

a. The New Testament concern with the docetic tendency.

St. Paul wrote that Jesus Christ was born of a woman under the law (Galatians 4:4). He taught that our Lord was descended from David according to the flesh and that He was of the Jewish race (Romans 1:3, 9:5). Christ came in the flesh, He was made to be sin, and this to condemn sin in the flesh (Romans 8:3, 2 Cor. 5:21). According to St. Paul, God was in Christ, the Christ of flesh and bone (2 Cor. 5:19). There is no uncertainty about the reality of the Incarnation in the Pauline writings, and his emphasis upon the appearance of Christ in the flesh has led commentators to hold that he was writing against the flesh-denying Docetae. But it is difficult to determine whether St. Paul was thus announcing his

---

[1] J.A. Dorner, The Person of Christ, 1861, Div. I, Vol. I, page 251.

first principle of Christology, that Christ came in the flesh, or consciously arguing against the docetic tendency, or perhaps against a particular group known as Docetae, or perhaps, all these things at once.

In the First Epistle of St. John there is clearer evidence that the author has a docetic group in mind when he implies that there are spirits who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (I Jn. 4:1-3).

But it is not necessary to isolate passages and attach them solely to certain groups which existed at the time of writing. E. Hoskyns in his commentary upon the Fourth Gospel has shown that the purpose of the Johannine writings cannot be confined to an argument against certain groups even though they were originally intended for particular men and women. Hoskyns writes: "He [the author of the Fourth Gospel] claims also to be setting forth the Truth in the midst of all-embracing falsehood. The truth as he sees it is light in the midst of darkness, life in the midst of death. The modern reader will therefore not apprehend the Fourth Gospel as its author meant it to be apprehended, if he concludes that it was written against, say Gnosticism, or Docetism, or Ebionitism, or even against the Jews, and rests satisfied with that explanation, without at the same time recognising that those ancient movements of religion are still deep-seated and destructive factors in our common life."[1]

A very great amount has been written concerning the "particular men and women" for whom St. John wrote. C.H. Dodd, for example, points out that at that time there was a temper in pagan religion toward a purer and

---

[1] E.C. Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, 2nd edition (revised), 1947, page 49.

more reasonable, inward piety which in its highest form became a "religion of mystical communion with the Divine".[1] Liberation from the world through knowledge of the light in esoteric revelation was a fundamental desire in this movement in which many were prepared to welcome Christianity as one new sect among others. There were "enthusiastic but ill-informed converts" eager to reinterpret Christianity in terms of the new paganism. In the light of this world-denying, antinomian paganism, in which the flesh of Jesus and the fact of His life upon earth were unimportant, Johannine literature is interpreted by Dodd as being "a brilliant attempt to undercut the whole process by a genuine and thoroughgoing reinterpretation, in which alien categories are completely mastered and transformed by the Gospel, and constrained to express the central truth of Christianity in universal terms."[2]

Hoskyns himself describes St. John as a man of his age subject to the many particular influences of his day, but not bound by these influences in such a way as to inhibit his message from universal application. Among these many influences which Hoskyns lists are St. John's knowledge of Old Testament Scripture, the Odes of Solomon, the Rabbinic writings, the influence of Greek thought in St. John's day, Oriental mysticism, and Jewish-hellenistic theology of Alexandria -- but not one of these provides the key to the understanding of the Gospel. "In fact the

---

1 C.H. Dodd, The Johannine Epistles, 1946, pages xvi-xxi.

2 Ibid., pages xvii-xviii. See also, A.E. Brooke, The Johannine Epistles, 1912, where the doctrinal element is stated to be the predominant interest of the author who was writing against false teachers and trying to strengthen his readers' defenses against dangers from such teaching: "The false teachers are still apparently concerned with the earlier stage of the problem [of docetism], the relation between the real man Jesus of Nazareth and the higher power with which He was brought into temporary connection". Page xlv.

observable field behind the Fourth Gospel is highly complicated, and the Fourth Gospel is therefore misconstrued, not so much when its apparent and suggestive allusions to all these various environments are over-emphasized, as, rather, when the gospel is depressed into one particular environment and explained, far too simply, as a piece of oriental mysticism, or of the Jewish-hellenistic theology of Alexandria. No doubt an antidote to this danger is provided by the co-existence of traces of all these influences in the gospel. But the danger is entirely obviated when it is recognized that what chiefly conditions the apprehension of the fourth Evangelist is a truly Biblical realism."[1]

This "truly Biblical realism" is the key to the universal message of the New Testament, and more particularly to the Johannine literature. It is a realism which opposes any tendency to disregard history, the material world in which Christ appeared in the flesh, and to look beyond history, beyond the world, beyond the advent of Christ in the flesh, to find immortality. This Biblical realism regards history, the world, the flesh, as having meaning, but not of themselves. Into history must come that which is beyond history before history will have any meaning; into the world must come something not of the world to give it meaning; man must be confronted by God before he will have any meaning in his life.[2]

This is the theme of Hoskyn's commentary upon the Fourth Gospel; it could well be adopted as the positive theme of this thesis, for, as the chapters which follow indicate, the docetic tendency in this day can be interpreted in just such language. When it now appears, it denies that

---

1 E.C. Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, page 108.

2 The theme of E.C. Hoskyn's The Fourth Gospel and his understanding of the purpose for which the author wrote are set down concisely on the following pages of his book: 35, 51, 56, 67, 84, 91, 96, 117.

the power of God can work from within the natural order of things, and explains it as a divine fiat coming wholly from without; it denies the fact of God working within historic event; it denies His manifestation in the form of the faithful human response of the Son to the Father; and it denies the equation of Suffering and Glory, Weakness and Power, Service and Rule, which is present in the Person of Christ throughout His Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension and Heavenly Session.

That God was in Christ, that is the Christian "scandal to sensitive souls" and it early caused the revolt away from the tremendous tension created when history and something beyond history met <u>in history</u>.[1] The revolt away from this scandal took two forms: it either looked upon history as of value in itself and so concentrated upon the man Jesus as of value in himself, a tendency reflected in the extreme forms of historical criticism which saw a sufficient end in the mere reconstruction of the life of Jesus from Birth to Death, or, in the second form, it disregarded the man Jesus entirely and looked to the Spiritual Christ for inspiration. This, according to Hoskyns, is the form of the revolt St. John faced: "..... he is faced by a real denial of Jesus Christ in the interest of a supposedly

---

[1] The historical tension of the Fourth Gospel: "The Fourth Gospel describes an ultimate present tension, the tension between flesh and Spirit, between life and Death and between death and Life, between darkness and Light, between Jesus and His disciples and the World, between those who believe and know and see and those who neither believe nor know, but are blind; in fact, the Fourth Gospel describes the tension between God and men." This tension is resolved in God alone: "[The author of the Fourth Gospel] is determined that the reader shall be -- shall we say? -- overwhelmed by the singleness of the theme which is Jesus of Nazareth, son of man -- Son of God, by the theme in which the tension of history is resolved only in God." <u>Ibid.</u>, pages 61, 67.

spiritual religion. The scandal of apostolic Christianity, the stumbling-block, is the concrete, historical figure of Jesus; and those ancient spiritual and prophetic men were in revolt against the apostolic claim that the Christ is or could have been — Jesus ([I John] ii.22); they were in revolt against the possibility that flesh, concrete human and visible flesh, could be of any essential or permanent importance for a truly spiritual religion."[1]

b. The docetic tendency in Gnosticism.

The early heresy of Docetism is perhaps best understood within the context of Gnosticism, although it may also be present as an attitude of the simple Christian who sincerely desires to exalt his Lord by emphasizing His divinity to the neglect of His humanity. Of the several characteristics of Gnosticism which are listed by Harnack, four are reproduced here which are central in this complex system: One, the world was created by a Demiurgus who is inferior to the supreme God of the Universe. Two, matter contains a physical potence of evil since it is created by an evil intermediate being, the Demiurgus, in an undertaking hostile to the supreme God. Three, above this evil realm of matter there exist Aeons which are real powers and heavenly persons "in whom is unfolded the reality of the Godhead". Christ is one of the heavenly Aeons and as such is distinct from the material Jesus. Four, the Christian concept of the elect or community called together by God is converted into "the college of the pneumatic" who are so psychologically endowed as to be capable of gnosis and the Divine Life. This concept is reflected in the

---

[1] Ibid., page 52.

Gnostic attitude toward bodily resurrection which is rejected on the ground that what is capable of gnosis is already possessed of immortality and awaits only the death of the body to pass into the "pneumatic pleroma".[1]

While the system of Gnosticism may appear mysteriously unreal, it is vitally concerned with matter as a potent force of evil. According to the Gnostic view of things, man is caught within this evil web of matter and how to escape from the world becomes a dominant problem. The Gnostic solution is this: some agent of the good universe must come from outside the forces of matter to free men from material evil.

It is at this point that the Gnostics looked to Christ as a means of escape from the material evil which ensnared them. "Christ was sent into the world to remedy the evil which the creative Aeon or Demiurgus had caused. He was to emancipate men from the tyranny of Matter, or of the evil principle; and by revealing to them the true God, who was hitherto unknown, to fit them by a perfection and sublimity of knowledge to enter the divine Pleroma. To give this knowledge was the end and object of Christ's coming upon earth; and hence the inventors and believers of the doctrine assumed to themselves the name of Gnostics."[2] According to their system, the true God could not prevent the creation of evil by the Demiurge, but he was ever attempting to remedy the situation. Christ was the primary remedial agent.

The preaching and teaching of the age in which Jesus Christ crucified was the typical sermon theme must have been the cause of great embarrassment to the Gnostics. If matter be evil, they would ask, how

---

[1] A. Harnack, History of Dogma, 1894, pages 256-261; cp. E. Burton, Heresies of the Apostolic Age, 1829, pages 35-51.

[2] E. Burton, The Heresies of the Apostolic Age, 1829, page 38.

could the true God assume this evil body, how could He come in the flesh and suffer? His death -- that was the greatest scandal. Since Christ was one of the good Aeons sent by the hitherto unknown God to reveal the knowledge of Him and to free men from the power of the creative Demiurge, it was impossible that any contaminating incarnation should take place, and the body of Jesus was held to be either pure illusion or an unsubstantial phenomenon or a real body upon whom the Aeonic Christ had descended to overpower and employ as a medium of revelation.[1] Gnostic Christology was forced by its dualism to reject the true Incarnation by one of these measures. Thus Docetism became one expression of the Gnostic desire to escape from the embarrassment which an incarnation of a divine being would impose upon that dualistic system.

According to this presentation of the docetic tendency, it might be assumed that it was a characteristic peculiar to Gnosticism and was never a development from <u>within</u> Christianity itself. However, it is argued by some that the Gnostic attitude toward the Person of Christ was the direct result of the fact that Gnosticism itself inherited the same pneumatology as that adopted by the Jews since the Exile. Not only can it be suggested that docetism was the result of the pneumatology of the day but the idea that docetism could have developed as a tendency within the Christian community has a certain attraction, for it would be entirely natural and possible that a Christian group in its desire to exalt its Lord

---

[1] Ebionitic is the term used to describe that Christology which taught that Jesus the man was adopted by the Father, sealed at the Baptism, and subsequently raised up to share the glory of the Father. Cerinthus provided a link between the extreme or phantasmal docetism and the Ebionitic thought which regarded Jesus as wholly man when he taught that the heavenly Christ descended upon the man Jesus in the form of the dove at the Baptism and then left Jesus the man before the Passion.

should so emphasize His divinity as to minimize the true humanity of His Person, and this without the slightest consciousness of doing so. Such an early group would be unaware of the need to adhere to any such formula as that of Chalcedon.[1]

As a distinct sect the Docetae are mentioned by Serapion, Bishop of Antioch (A.D. 190-203) in his letter written to the church at Rhossos where trouble had arisen as a result of the reading of the Gospel of Peter. Clement of Alexandria mentions Julius Cassianus as ὁ τῆς δοκήσεως ἐξάρχων, though it is generally held that the heresy antedates Cassianus.[2] Whether Docetism preceded Gnosticism, grew out of Gnosticism, or developed simultaneously with it but as a separate Christian sect, there is agreement that the Christology it represents went hand in glove with the Gnostic dualistic theology, and it may conservatively be stated that the docetic idea was flourishing by the middle of the second century.

c. Early docetic writings.

The three docetic works previously cited, Pistis Sophia, the Gospel of Peter, and the Acts of John, bear no salutations to particular docetic groups, nor do the authors make any allusion to such sects within the body of the writings. The editor of the Coptic translation from the Greek of Pistis Sophia is convinced that the original was the Apocalypse

---

[1] A. Fortesque, "Docetism", Encyc. Rel. Eth., 1912, Vol.IV, pages 832-835: Here the position is strongly stated that Docetism never did exist as a sect or perversion which developed from within Christianity. It did exist, however, in many groups as the corollary of Gnostic dualism.

[2] On Julius Cassianus, W. Smith, H. Wace, The Dictionary of Christian Biography, 1877, Vol.I, pages 412, 413; on Clement of Alexandria, Serapion, Bishop of Antioch, Ibid., Vol.IV, page 612. Quotation from Clement, Strom., i.21.

of Sophia which is attributed to Valentinus, a learned Gnostic who lived in Egypt in the latter half of the second century. Harnack, however, proposes a terminus a quo at A.D. 140 and extends the terminus ad quem to as late as A.D. 302 in his dating of the work.

The docetism in this document is evident from these quotations selected from the translation into English of Pistis Sophia: "It came to pass, after these things, that I [Christ] looked down again into the world of men; I found Mary, who is called my mother, after the material body; I spoke to her also in the form of Gabriel; and when she had betaken herself into the height toward me, I implanted in her the first power which I had received from the hands of Barbelo, that is to say, the body which I bore in the height, and instead of the soul, I implanted in her the power which I had received from the hands of the great Saboath, the good, who is in the region of the right".[1]

When H.B. Swete edited the Akhmim Fragment of the Apocryphal Gospel of St. Peter he dated it as a work of the second century with the terminus ad quem at A.D. 170 and indicated his opinion that it was not written before the middle of the second century. (This is the work cited by Serapion, Bishop of Antioch, prior to its citation by Eusebius, in what was probably a treatse delivered at Rhossus on the Gospel of St. Peter.) The editor suggests that the author of this apocryphal work as one within the Church and intended his work not as a tract for some outside sect but, rather, hoped by it to propagate a Docetic Christology within the church from which he had not yet parted company. The author of the Gospel also followed the practice of the Docetae of Western Syria in publishing a Gospel of this nature under the name of the Apostolic founder of the Antioch

---

[1] G.R.S. Mead, ed., Pistis Sophia, 1896, page 13.

Church.[1]

The fragment of the Gospel of St. Peter has in it these characteristics which help to identify it as docetic: The Lord is free from pain at the moment of His crucifixion; His power deserts Him at the moment of death; the angels and the Risen Christ achieve supernatural heights; the Cross is personified and speaks a message. These last two characteristics are common to the Christology which is more closely akin to the mystery religions than the New Testament teaching. This relationship of the work to these cults is further shown in the sealing of the tomb with seven seals, a symbolism common to the esoteric mystery religions of a dualistic and highly immaterial, spiritual nature. Also the omission from the Gospel of any of the Easter Week appearances may indicate a docetic denial of the bodily resurrection of Christ, and the use the author makes of the word kurios may indicate that he applied it in the cult sense to the Christ and not necessarily to the Jesus of Nazareth.

Not later than the middle of the second century, the Manichaeans formed into one body five books and substituted them for what are now the canonical Acts. One of these of special interest here because of its highly docetic content is the Acts of John, fragments of which Zahn dates at 130 A.D. The evidence of the docetic Christology of the book is quoted from the edition by M.R. James in The Apocryphal New Testament:

"..... and oft-times he [Christ] would appear to me [John] as a small man and uncomely, and then again as one reaching unto heaven."

"And oftentimes when I walked with him, I desired to see the print of his foot, whether it appeared on the earth .... and I never saw it."

"I, then, when I saw him suffer, did not even abide by his

---

[1] H.B. Swete, ed., The Akhmim Fragment of The Apocryphal Gospel of St. Peter, 1893, pages xxxvi ff.

suffering, but fled unto the Mount of Olives, weeping at that which had befallen. And when he was crucified on the Friday, at the sixth hour of the day, darkness came upon all the earth. And my Lord, standing in the midst of the cave enlightening it, said: "John, unto the multitude below in Jerusalem I am being crucified ... But unto thee I speak ...".

"Nothing, therefore, of the things which they say of me [Christ] have I suffered."[1]

d. The Patristic writers against the docetic heresy.[2]

The denial of the fleshly existence of Christ, this is the form of the revolt away from the "scandal" of Christianity that was one of the chief concerns of the Patristic authors. In their arguments against the docetism of their day, they give a clear picture of what docetic tendency meant in that early Christian age.

The blood of Christ's body was still fresh in Judea when His body was said to be a phantom, so wrote Jerome. Of Saturninus it is written: "He has also laid it down as a truth, that the Saviour was without birth, without body, and without figure, but was, by supposition, a visible man; ..."[3] Marcion, too, denied the birth of Christ and so denied the Incarnation.[4] This Marcion, who became a Christian in Rome in the late second century and was a chief among docetic heretics, joined

---

1 M.R. James, The Apocryphal New Testament, 1924, page 251, par 89; page 252, par 93; page 254, par 97; page 255, par 101.

2 Quotations are taken from the English translation of A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, 1870.

3 Irenaeus, Adv. Her., I, xxiv, 2.

4 Tertullian, Adv. Marc., III, xi, "... Marcion was apprehensive that a belief of the fleshly body would also involve a belief of birth ...".

ranks with those of his day whose common characteristic was by some means to deny the Incarnation of Christ.

It is from Tertullian's work against Marcion that most is known about Docetism at that time. Tertullian writes: "Our heretic must now cease to borrow poison from the Jew -- "the asp", as the adage runs, "from the viper" -- and henceforth vomit forth the virulence of his own disposition, as when he alleges Christ to be a phantom. Except, indeed, that this opinion of his will be sure to have others to maintain it in his precocious and somewhat abortive Marcionites, whom the Apostle John designated as anti-Christs, when they denied that Christ was come in the flesh; not that they did this with the view of establishing the right of the other god ..., but because they had started with assuming the increditibility of an incarnate God."[1]

Where Tertullian writes that Marcion denied the Nativity of Christ in order to deny the flesh, or else denied His flesh that he might deny the Nativity, he also sums up the attitude of the Docetists toward the Birth Festival: "At all events, he who represented the flesh of Christ to be imaginary was equally able to pass of His nativity as a phantom; so that the virgin's conception, and pregnancy, and child-bearing, and then the whole course of her infant too, would have to be regarded as putative."[2]

Along with those who would deny the birth outright there were some who advanced the more subtle admission of the birth and accompanied it with a variety of theories about the substance of which the body was composed: "Now, concerning even the Lord Jesus, into how great a diversity

---

1 Ibid., III, viii.

2 Tertullian, De Carni Christi, I.

of opinion are they divided! One party form Him of the blossoms of all the Aeons. Another party will have it that He is made up only of those ten whom the Word and the Life produce; from which circumstance the titles of the Word and the Life were suitably transferred to him." (There continues a list of various derivations of the body of Jesus all foreign to the Biblical account of a natural birth.)[1] Some held that Christ bore the nature of an angel and others that He was formed of inaccessible matter with each of His years representing and being the year of one Aeon. Each chronological Aeon lays hold on a number of souls who see Jesus differently because of the varying times of the Aeons.[2]

The Ophite and Sethian sects endeavoured to explain the union of the Christ with Jesus and the result was what might be termed a functional union in which the man Jesus became an instrument governed and controlled by the Christ-Spirit: "But Jesus, inasmuch as he was begotten of the Virgin through the agency of God, was wiser, purer, and more righteous than all other men: Christ united to Sophia descended into him, and thus Jesus Christ was produced. They affirm that many of his disciples were not aware of the descent of Christ into him; but that, when Christ did descend on Jesus, he then began to work miracles, and heal, and announce the unknown Father, and openly confess himself to be the son of the first man. The powers and the father of Jesus were angry at these proceedings, and laboured to destroy him; and when he was being led away for this purpose, they saw that Christ himself, along with Sophia, departed from him into the state of an incorruptible Aeon, while Jesus was crucified. Christ, however, was not forgetful of his Jesus, but sent down a certain energy into him from above, which raised him up again in the body ...."[3]

---

1 Tertullian, Adv. Valent., XXXIX.
2 Tertullian, De Carni Christi, XIV; Hippolytus, Ref. of all Her, VII, iii, iv.
3 Irenaeus, Adv. Her., I, xxx, 12, 13.

This idea of functional union eliminates the Cross as an historic event of eternal significance, and this is a characteristic common among these strange early docetic Christologies. The docetism of Saturninus and Basilides taught concerning Christ that although He appeared as a man on earth, wrought miracles, and was sent to bestow deliverance from the World Power to them that believed in Him He did not Himself suffer death, but Simon of Cyrene, being compelled to bear the cross, was transfigured that he might look like Jesus and was crucified "while Jesus himself received the form of Simon, and, standing by, laughed at them".[1] Cerinthus also joins in this general tendency to avoid the Cross. He not only denied the Virgin Birth and asserted natural procreation, taught that Christ descended upon Jesus at the Baptism and that Jesus preached an unknown Father who was distinct from the God of the Old Testament, but he also taught that Christ departed from Jesus at the end in order that the Christ might not suffer, for Christ, "being spiritual, remained beyond the possibility of suffering".[2]

III. The continuation of the docetic tendency in the first four General Councils of the Church.

For the purpose of this thesis the first three general councils of the Church afford examples of the constancy of influence with which the docetic tendency presents itself and the Fourth General Council provides a measure for the Christologies of this day which continue to be faced with the problem of how to state that Jesus Christ is one person, human and divine, and to do it in such a way that the truth intended by the expression

---

1 Ibid., I, xxiv, 4.
2 Hippolytus, Ref. of all Her., VII, xxi.

human and divine is preserved. This has been a pressing problem from the time it was generally confessed that Jesus Christ was divine at Nicaea, A.D. 325, was wholly human, Constantinople, A.D. 381, and as human and divine is yet one Person, Ephesus, A.D. 431, who has unconfusedly two natures, one Person, Chalcedon, A.D. 451.

The situations out of which these conciliar statements were made were different from the situation today; however, of the heresies condemned, the orthodoxy preserved, each contains truth applicable to Christology's continuing struggle to express the humanity and the divinity of Christ. The multi-form, ubiquitous docetic tendency is present, as it was present in these early controversies, whenever in a solution to this struggle the divinity of Christ is made to overshadow His humanity.

a. The First General Council, Nicaea, A.D. 325.

When the Church at Nicaea affirmed that Jesus was divine, it reached its conclusion out of the belief in a God whose nature permitted Him to be with man. The opposition at Nicaea defined God as one remote, and thus limited their concept of the Incarnation. The nature of God, and the relation of the Logos to God were at the centre of this controversy.

Origen of Alexandria wrote that it was the Logos in Jesus which spoke the words, "I am the way, and the truth and the life", and here is a trace of that idea of incarnation which has been described earlier as a functional union and not a coming in the flesh of Christ Himself. The position of Arius, defendant at the Council, Presbyter of Alexandria, pupil of Lucian of Antioch, expressed this functional union when he taught that the body of Jesus was inhabited by the Logos in an 'incarnation' made

possible by the Virgin Birth in which the Logos took the place of a human soul in the body of Jesus.

This position clearly treats the humanity of Jesus as of no consequence except in so far as it is an instrument for the Logos to use, and this expresses a docetic tendency considerably developed from the first naive Docetism.

The docetic tendency in Arius appears as the result of his description of Jesus as a human body living under the control of the Logos. This description was the result of a belief about the nature of the pre-existent Logos and His relationship to God the Father. According to Arius, God is remote and does not come into contact with Creation except through the Logos who, as God's creaturely mediator, inhabited a human body and caused to appear upon the earth a new being, neither man nor God.

The positive expression by the Council at Nicaea came out of the position held by Athanasius, who shared with Arius and all other parties concerned the belief that Jesus was the incarnation of the Logos. Perhaps it is truly said that Athanasius did not fully realize the consequences of God becoming man, but he did hold to a belief in a God of such a nature that would permit Him to become man. For him, God was good and imparted to men the light of the Logos, who was of the very substance and being of God the Father. When He became incarnate in Jesus and inhabited the whole man, the Logos so assumed human nature as to make man what He was and so save man. As Logos incarnate, Jesus was very God.

Together, Arius and Athanasius show how a Christology is bound to be affected by a Theology, and how the results of a Theology may be a docetically inclined Christology. It is interesting to note how true both of these men were to the Christological temper of their age. In neither

case is there mention made of the humanity of Jesus, except as it is taken up wholly, or in part, into the Logos. The divinity of Christ was the uppermost concern of the first Christologies and nearly all appear to us now to have been guilty of not admitting the full humanity of Jesus.

b. The Second General Council, Constantinople, A.D. 381.

The First Council affirmed the Godhead of Jesus; the Second affirmed the manhood. The positions the Councils refuted shared a docetic tendency in that Arianism, in which the Logos was not very God, did not hold that Jesus was truly human (or truly God), and Apollinarianism, which was condemned by the Second Council, while it perceived that the Logos was very God, did not provide an explanation of the Incarnation in which the Logos took a complete human nature.

According to this position, the 'flesh' in body and soul only was assumed and the divine Logos took the place of the human mind in Jesus. This position of Appollinarius was based on the argument that of the nature of man, the mind is evil, but the body and soul are only weak. By the inhabitation of the Logos in the place of the human mind, the body and soul, accustomed to control from the mind, became divine through the command of the inhabiting Logos.

The Church perceived the docetic tendency of this position which denied the full humanity of Jesus and made him like man. He had a human soul and body, but was not man, for in place of human mind was substituted the Logos. There could be no real incarnation until all human nature was assumed, just as there could be no salvation until all the human nature was healed.

c. The Third General Council, Ephesus, A.D. 431.

The two contenders whose Christologies were the subject of this Third Council's controversy were Nestorius, a representative of Antiochene thought, and Cyril, who was a representative of Alexandrian thought. Nestorius, true to his background, believed that Jesus must be a man with a genuine moral struggle. He opposed the application of the term theotokos to Mary the mother of Jesus and argued that it implied that Jesus was simply God. To Nestorius the Incarnation meant that God dwelt in a true man, and the use of theotokos could be defended only if it meant that Mary was the mother of the divine Logos as well as the human Jesus.

Cyril of Alexandria answered that Christ could not be two such distinct persons as Nestorius taught, i.e. divine Logos and human Jesus, and that a unity of person must be maintained. This unity he expressed through the 'divine personality' of Christ, who had in the incarnation assumed human nature but not a human personality. Christ, in effect, became man, but not a man. Cyril taught that by assuming human nature and retaining 'divine personality', the divine Christ received by communication the human properties and was able to suffer as one person, whereas Nestorius had not admitted that the Logos could suffer. Christ Incarnate had the appearance of ignorance, according to Cyril, and He pretended not to know. In all things, He accommodated Himself to human nature, but was in fact God Himself working out man's redemption. Thus the unity of the Person of Christ was maintained, but it was a unity through 'divine personality' at the expense of a true humanity.

This unity through divine personality was the official pronouncement of the Church at Constantinople, but it was more a victory

won through sharp dealing on the part of Cyril than a victory for Christian orthodoxy, as is well illustrated in the continuation of docetic Monophysitism which tended to transform Constantinople's unity through the 'divine personality' and dual natures into a unity through one nature, and that divine.

d. The Fourth General Council, Chalcedon, A.D.451.

It has been said of this Council that in defending the two-natures-one-person definition of the Person of Christ by holding that Christ is homoousios with man and with God, Chalcedon states problems but does not solve anything. It excludes the extremes of Antioch, the two sharp distinction between the two natures as in the arguments of Nestorius, and the extremes of Alexandria which would provide a unity by sacrificing the two natures to one divine nature. The Fourth Council is evaluated as the "crown and sum of all four councils", and as such it provides a measure for Christology throughout the ages when it simply asks of those Christologies the question: Is the Person of Christ so expressed as to safeguard the significance of the humanity and the divinity? If Chalcedon had endeavoured to explain how the two natures do exist together in one Person, it would have answered in the terms of A. D. 451 and would have sacrificed in large measure its value for the Church today which not only asks different questions than it did in A.D. 451 but is looking

for answers different from those given in the Fifth Century.[1]

IV. The Christological problem at the beginning of the Twentieth Century: The Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith.

The relationship between the Jesus of History whose life is recorded in part in the New Testament, and the Christ of Faith, whose life is present to the believer -- that was the problem facing Christology at the beginning of this Twentieth Century.

It was the result of the work of men such as Lessing, Goethe, and Herder who, among others, stimulated the modern movement known as Biblical Criticism by their varying attitudes toward the Scriptures as revelation from God; it was the result of the work of the Hegelians and those other philosophers who engaged in a 'Christology' based very largely upon a priori assumptions about the Person of Jesus, who was regarded either as the super-human being of the dogma of the institutional Church or the mystical ideal of the individual consciousness; it was the result, finally, of a reaction against these and kindred a priori systems, a reaction which endeavoured to find the real Jesus as recorded in the Gospels, and sometimes claimed to see through the Gospels into the very self-

---

[1] This very brief account of a few of the aspects of the first four General Councils is taken from: Bishop Bull, The Opinion of the Catholic Church for the First Three Centuries, 1825; E. Burton, The Heresies of the Apostolic Age, 1829; J.A. Dorner, The Person of Christ, 1861; A. Harnack, History of Dogma, 1894; R.B. Tollington, Clement of Alexandria, C.E. Raven, Apollinarianism, 1923; A.C. Headlam, Christian Theology, 1937; J.F. Bethune-Baker, An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine, 7th edition, 1942. It is especially dependent upon the unpublished lectures of Professor D.M. Baillie on the subject, "The Development of Christology", delivered in St.Mary's College, the University of St.Andrews, during the academic year 1951-52.

consciousness of the Person recorded there.

New Testament Criticism as it became a strict historical criticism could produce a variety of attitudes toward the One whose life the Gospels recorded. It could optimistically announce that it had found the person Himself and could reproduce His life perfectly, or nearly so, and hence the flood of volumes on the life of Jesus. It could also announce that the person it found in the Gospels was a very real and historic figure, but was not at all a figure of the stature of Him presented by the Epistles not discovered by the faith of the individual. It could announce that the Gospel story yielded practically nothing of the actual life of Christ, but only vague recollections expressed according to certain developed story-forms or, perhaps, was not so much concerned with presenting an historic person as a religious idea and ideal. And out of this great variety of scholarship there arose the controversy, the heart of which is recorded in this question: Jesus or Christ?[1]

But this question, the Jesus of history or the Christ of faith, implies a much larger question. It can be answered, and truly, that the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith are one and the same Person, or it can be answered, as has been attempted, that they are two distinct persons. Each answer depends not so much upon an understanding and ability to answer the ancient question about the Person of Christ, whether He was divine or human, or divine and human as He lived upon earth, but rather, upon a particular understanding of the entire relationship of God,

---

[1] "Jesus or Christ?", Hibbert Journal Supplement 1909, London, 1909, being eighteen essays written on the subject of the relationship of the Jesus of History, i.e., of the New Testament record, and the Christ of Faith, i.e., Him who is present now to the individual through faith.

in Christ, to His world.

The question, Jesus or Christ?, breaks down into sub-questions, all of which are asked and variously answered in this Century. It is now asked, How are spirit and matter related? The answer is reflected in the increased emphasis upon spiritual healing. It is now asked, How can God act in and reveal Himself in History? The answer is reflected in the great number of books being written on the meaning and interpretation of History. It is asked, How can the eternal be expressed in the temporal, and what is the relationship between the two? The answer is reflected in the books, theses, and articles published which deal with the subject of Christ and Time.

How far have the ancient questions about the divinity and humanity of Christ been expanded! And yet, at the very centre of all these questions being asked today is that central question, What of Christ?, for in His Person lies the key to the answer to all these sub-questions. If Christology can adequately explain the Person of Christ so that both the humanity and the divinity are preserved in all their significance, so that He is dependent man making an obedient response supported by the grace from God the Father, and is at the same time the very Son of God, whose Person lays hold of the Power of God Almighty, whose Person continues One Being through temptation, suffering, the working of miracles, death, and Exaltation and Heavenly Session at the Right Hand of God the Father, then Christology can claim to have provided a basis upon which the questions of the Church today can be answered.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine British Christology of this Twentieth Century to discover, in so far as it is able, how that Christology has succeeded in this explanation and how its docetic

tendencies present themselves where it has failed to make such an explanation.

Chapter II.

THE APPEARANCE OF THE DOCETIC TENDENCY IN THE EXPLANATION OF MIRACLE

Introduction.

There are two general approaches to a study of the miraculous in the Gospels. One is to describe and account for the miraculous through the nature of the Person of Christ; the other is to account for it through a particular World View. Neither of these approaches excludes the other, just as neither guarantees against the presence of a docetic tendency. When the study of miracle is directed toward the Person of Christ, the worker of the miracle, the result might become tinctured with docetism if it tended to explain miracle primarily as the sign and evidence of the divinity of Jesus, as if in miracle the divine power could be apprehended as working outside or above or apart from the humanity of Jesus. A docetic tendency might appear in a World View account of miracle which explained it as if it were the incursive fiat of a totally other power into the evil of this material existence.

The docetic tendency is present when in either of these methods of miracle study, Person of Christ or World View, the New Testament message of the wholeness of this life in which spirit and matter, divinity and humanity, are inextricably, paradoxically, perhaps incomprehensibly intertwined, interactive, and interdependent, is depreciated. This wholeness in which God has created man, which He has revealed in His Son's incarnation, and to which He calls men through the Gospel of Christ, is

contradicted whenever a theology tends to treat the body, the world, temporal history, as waste lands from which the soul must rise in order to be redeemed. This tendency has tempted Christian theology from that time when redemption was first equated with illumination through the incorporeal Christ-Spirit to those so endowed as to receive it and continues this day whenever redemption, salvation, are made to mean escape by the redeemed soul from this present 'vale of tears'. How different is the New Testament interpretation of this life, this world, this history as lives, areas, and events into which redemption has come and made itself manifest in the Incarnation and Christ's continuing activity as Lord in His Church.

This Chapter has to do primarily with the question of what part does the docetic tendency, as described above, play in the account by recent British theology of the appearance of the miraculous element in the Gospels. The questions an account of the miraculous must answer -- why were the miracles included originally in the Gospel Story? what significance do they hold for the Gospel message itself? what do the miracles as signs and wonders mean in relation to the Person of Christ? what is the relationship between miracle and world view?-- have caused this Chapter to be divided into three sections: Miracle and New Testament Criticism; Miracle and Sign; Miracle and World-View. The two methods of miracle study, i.e., through the Person of Christ and World View, appear in each section, and the final section tends to show how it is impossible to keep separate these methods when a world view must depend finally upon the view held toward the Person of Christ and God's reconciling activity through Him.

I. Some critical attitudes toward the presence of the miraculous in the Gospels.

The significance for this thesis of a study of various critical attitudes toward the presence of the miraculous in the Gospels is illustrated by the difference which exists between miracle study and the conducting of an experiment in a laboratory. In this latter case once the experimental apparatus is set up and the material for research assembled the student is confidently content to let the research results tell their own story, to prove or disprove an hypothesis. Once the experiment is completed, the results will not be disputed. But in the former case, that of the miracle study, the results will be disputed, for there will be disagreement not only about the type of apparatus used, but about the factors introduced, and what one student holds to be a real factor, another will hold to be a myth.

In the case of the New Testament scholar, behind his 'experiment' in miracle will exist an enormous superstructure of presuppositions. This is necessarily so because of the nature of the material he is working with, for miracle is a part of the Gospel and its study cannot be isolated to conform to the rules of the laboratory. The presuppositions with which miracle study is approached are vitally important and in them may lurk the source of a docetic tendency in the explanation of miracle.

The presuppositions of the critical attitude taken toward miracle indicate the general attitude taken toward the world. Modern and traditional theories of miracle have each rested upon an evaluation of the natural order, the former holding it to be a self-enclosed system, the latter a system sustained by natural law and into which incursions are made

by a divine Power. When these evaluations of the natural order and explanations of miracle have failed and been given up, it is because they rested upon the premises of human supposition about the natural order and failed to recognize that the solution to miracle lies not in an understanding of the natural order by itself, but in an understanding of the entire message of redemption in the Gospel. Thus, involved in a critical attitude toward the idea of miracle is the attitude toward the very nature of God and man and the world.

a. The critical account of the miraculous which explains the Gospel story and the historical event behind it in terms of man's knowledge of the natural order.

It might be said of William Sanday that he went as far as he could to hold together the miracle story and the miracle event and yet to adopt and interpret for British theology the 'new learning' of the critical spirit of his day which was moving on the face of the Continental Theology. He consistently followed the rule of keeping hold of both the miraculous event and the narrative of it as long as possible. He admitted that there were elements in the Gospel accounts of miracles which made it impossible to equate, as far as historical accuracy was concerned, story and event, but these elements he kept to a minimum and endeavoured so to explain them that the fact of miracle remained unimpaired. It is his explanation of the nature of the miraculous and its bearing upon the miracle story and event that is of particular interest to this thesis.

In his retiring lectures, Divine Overruling, Sanday gave the general principles of his attitude toward the presence of the miraculous

element in the Gospels and the relation between the Gospel miracle narrative and the miracle event. He prefaces his statement of principles with the thought that the desire to maintain the same personal relationship to God and Christ in which the New Testament authors stood is what has bound together the Christian ages. He would by his principles or suppositions for the interpretation of miracle story maintain both the relationship to God and Christ of the New Testament authors, and the continuity with past ages of Christianity. His suppositions are these: one, poetry comes before prose; two, the truly divine is not to be sought in the abnormal (although, as he points out, for ages past there has been this tendency); three, the truly divine is really spiritual; four, the accounts of miracles which do not appear to be abnormal occurances encourage the belief in other miracles which seem to involve a violation of the natural order and might otherwise be rejected; and five, where the abnormal, nature-violating element is present in the miracle account, it has come into that account not so much as the result of the original miraculous occurance but has appeared in the recounting of that event.[1]

In one phrase, Sanday's rule is this: Abnormality or violation of natural law is not necessarily the sign of miracle.

There are two possible applications of this general rule. One is that what appears to be violation of natural law in the miracle story will appear less and less to be abnormal as men gain an ever increasing understanding of the structure of the natural order. Sanday wrote: "That miracles happened in the full conviction and belief of the early Christians, and with the full significance that they attached to miracles, is as certain as our own existence. The only question that is open to

---

[1] William Sanday, Divine Overruling; 1920, pages 64-75.

discussion is the more exact analysis of the sense in which we at the present day are to describe them as miracles". Even in today's description of miracle, Sanday admits, there will probably remain a baffling, unexplainable residuum, and this present age must be content if that residuum be brought within narrowing limits.[1]

By this point of view it is implied that as man's knowledge of the complex nature of this order of creation increases, the miraculous, or at least the miraculous understood as abnormal, will become less and less the proper descriptive category into which to place certain New Testament events. The miracle event will remain acceptable, perhaps it will be even more acceptable as it is explained in terms of modern knowledge about the 'natural order'. The Gospel story will be acceptable as true, but with an important qualification. The trueness of this story will always remain relative to the degree of knowledge about the natural order held by those men who recounted and finally set down their description of the event which had taken place.

Thus this first application of the general rule that abnormality or violation of natural law is not necessarily the sign of miracle does not put into question the <u>occurrence</u> in history of the so-called miraculous event, but only the <u>account</u> of the occurrence, and this in so far as the 'abnormal' element has crept into the narrative through the lack of understanding of the natural order at the beginning of our era.

The other application of the general rule about violation of the natural order and miracle is this: the explanation of a miracle is confined within natural order by this rule. It would be argued, in this second application of the rule, that since the miraculous cannot be

---

[1] William Sanday, <u>The Life of Christ in Recent Research</u>; 1908, pages 224, 225.

explained by abnormality, then it can be explained by normality, and by this alone. In other words, all events taking place within the natural order including the 'miracle', confined to the laws of the natural order.

Sanday makes this second application of his general rule when he states his opinion about miracle in Form and Content, an opinion, he writes, "which it has taken me a lifetime to form".[1] There he is arguing that his interpretation of the Descensus ad Infernos of the Creed should apply not only to this clause, but to other clauses of the Creed and to miracles. He quotes R.A. Knox's paraphrase of himself: "Since the people of the time [of Christ] were the sort of people they were, that is just the sort of thing they would have thought He did".[2] What the people of His time thought of Christ was in part relative to the tempter and spirit of the age.

Sanday desires to bring modern Christianity into "a system of unified thought" which would transcend the difficulties imposed by the limited world-view of first century Christians. If this were done, he believes, there would be nothing to prevent the world from becoming Christian.[3]

This unification of thought, according to Sanday, is to be found in the knowledge of the natural order which is the heritage of this age and is a far cry from the meagre knowledge and understanding of the natural order at the time of Christ's life upon earth. The degree and quality of knowledge of the two ages is compared by Sanday, with this result for miracle study: "For myself, I have always said that I do not deny the reality of miracle. What I contend for is that there are in the nature of things (i.e. in the world as God has made it) limitations to miracle of which

---

1 William Sanday, Form and Content in Christian Tradition, 1916, page 17.
2 Ibid, page 17.
3 Ibid., page 19.

the men of our Lord's day were not aware, but of which we are aware now".[1] The implication in this statement seems to be this: the miracle event itself is understandable through a knowledge of the natural order.

These first and second applications of Sanday's general rule imply that as an increase in knowledge of the natural order is attained, so will the modern readers of the Gospels be able to detect and cast aside the abnormalities in the miracle stories, and as the actual event thus becomes clearer, it in turn will also be made more understandable through this acquired knowledge of the natural order of things.

The significance of Sanday's interpretation of miracle in the light of the modern forms of the docetic tendency appears in the manner in which the natural order is described as if it were a self-enclosed, independent system, a world of being so established in natural law that there is little communication between the natural and the spiritual. Sanday implies, when he writes of the natural limitations to miracle of which the men of the Lord's day were not aware, that Jesus was Himself limited by the laws of nature, but that the limitation was not perceived by his associates who were ignorant of these laws. Truly, Jesus did live a limited, human life, but not in the sense that He lived within an order which excluded the spiritual or was explainable through natural knowledge alone. This interpretation of Sanday's seems to draw too fine a line between the spiritual and the natural, and the sharp distinction made between spirit and nature is reflected in Sanday's Christology where he describes the divinity of Jesus as acting through a certain area of His consciousness in which mediation from the natural world surrounding Him evidently is not necessary.[2] In so far as Sanday leaves so little room for

---

1 Ibid., page 17.

2 William Sanday, Christologies Ancient and Modern, 1910; Chapters VI-VII, summary on page 159.

the interacting of spirit and nature, he seems to be arguing against his own desire to bring Christianity into a truly unified system.

What Sanday has pointed out about the increase of knowledge of the natural order is certainly true and does have a bearing upon the acceptance of the miraculous in the Gospels, but his explanations also make it clear that his rules for the acceptance of miracle event and narrative afford no key to the problem of miracle, the problem of how to describe the power of God as working in such a way that spirit and nature are not two separate 'worlds' but are closely related, so long as the final decision on miracle is held in abeyance awaiting a greater understanding of the natural order.

An attitude toward miracle and its story which may provide a corrective and avoid some of the above tendencies toward dualism is that to be found in G.S. Duncan's Jesus, Son of Man. It is there stated that miracles were not abnormalities to those who witnessed them. But this statement is not the first step in an argument which would desire the impossible feat of capturing the mind of the witnesses, or would rely upon the limitation of a past age's knowledge of nature as key to understanding miracle, but is the plain statement that miracle and miracle narrative are parts of the Gospel, which any effort to cut out would render the Gospel unintelligible. The miraculous is accepted by Duncan as lying within the Gospel framework. There is strong evidence that miracles did take place; the historian would be untrue to his own standard if he held that they could not have taken place.[1]

This argument of Duncan's may help to safeguard the truth that since the Christian Gospel is at its centre an incarnational faith, then

---

[1] G.S. Duncan, Jesus, Son of Man, 1947, pages 13, 41, and 42.

the miraculous content of the Gospel message can most adequately, and perhaps only in this way, be explained by an incarnational explanation in which neither the natural and spiritual nor human and divine 'worlds' are given such hard and fixed dimensions as to exclude the one from the other.

b. The critical approach to the miraculous which explains Gospel Story and Historical Event in terms of an expanding view of miracle.

A second form of critical attitude toward the presence of the miraculous element in the Gospels is that which regards the miracle story as the faithful interpretation of the miraculous event. This attitude casts no doubt upon the truth of the story nor upon the honesty of the New Testament authors; it asserts the claim that the stories as interpretations possess and reveal a greater reality than they would were they purely factual accounts. This interpretation of the miracle story is a part of an expanding view of the miraculous, just as the former view of miracle in terms of natural law was an advance from the day when miracle was described in terms of abnormality, if not magic. It is important to consider these expanding views of miracle, for they indicate a way out of the dualistic interpretation of miracle as explainable either by natural law or by divine fiat from without, both of which views have implicit in them a docetic tendency which stems from the too sharp separation of the material from the spiritual, the human from the divine.

One aspect of this expanding view of the miraculous is present in the work of Alan Richardson who assigns to miracle its vital place in the Gospel message as a whole when he describes the miracle story as the interpretive record of selected facts which shows "... that Jesus was

believed by those who knew Him best to have worked the very miracles which the prophets had associated with the dawning of the Messianic Age".[1] To the eyes of the faithful as they looked back upon the miracles of Jesus these events were seen not as sudden divine incursions significant only for the moment and only for him who was healed or otherwise made whole, but were seen to be a part of the unveiling of God's truth. Richardson writes: "Therefore, to understand the meaning of the miracle-stories of the Gospel tradition it is first necessary to have penetrated the incognito of Jesus, and to have seen behind the Jesus of Galilee the Christ of the New Testament faith".[2] By this "incognito of Jesus" Richardson is with different words expressing the idea that the flesh was a veil partially hiding the Godhead. He is, perhaps, also expressing the idea that the incognito was not so much the flesh of Jesus as the 'flesh' of them who had first to be cured of their blindness through the Resurrection of Jesus before they could 'see' through this incognito and so behold His glory. To the early Church this incognito of Jesus did not exist; by faith they 'saw' through it and so could use the miracle story as a teaching instrument which both narrated an historical truth and proclaimed the dawn of the New Age.

Richardson's account of the interpretive quality of the miracle

---

1 Alan Richardson, The Miracle-Stories of the Gospels, 1941, page 130. The conclusions and arguments used by Richardson are the result of a method employed some forty years before by James Moffat, who in 1901 drew attention to the fact that in the historical study of miracle, it was important to relate miracle not only to the entire Gospel message but to relate it to its total original environment: "However such phenomena (miracles) be estimated, they are not intelligible unless the writings are set in their true place as influenced by the dogmatic and didactic aims of a later age. Their contents must be judged from their function and atmosphere, as well as from the interval elapsing between their subject and themselves". James Moffat, The Historical New Testament, 1901, page 19.

2 Alan Richardson, op.cit., page 137.

story places miracle in the context of the Messianic activity of Jesus and so describes an event in history as having redemptive significance. This is part of that expanding view of miracle by which history and redemption, nature and spirit, are brought into closer connection. Richardson is indicating this closer relationship between the two 'worlds' when he suggests that history, and as a part of history, the miracle-event, becomes more real and carries greater truth the more it is faithfully interpreted.[1]

This same theme is reflected in the position of E.C. Hoskyns in regard to the interpretation in miracle-story of miracle-event. He writes: "The earlier narratives [i.e., the earlier synoptic tradition] tended to become more and more clearly symbolical of the later experiences of the Christians, the original history providing the framework within which reference was made to contemporary history, and the materials out of which narratives and discourses could be constructed."[2] An example of this use by the Church of the earlier narrative is given in Hoskyn's explanation of the healing of the man born blind in the ninth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John. This narrative is not the outcome "of a desire to give concrete embodiment to the idea of Jesus as the light of the world, but is, rather, the result of a very complicated and complete fusion into one narrative of the experience of conversion to Christianity, of the controversy with the Jews which was caused by the success of the Christian mission, and of the traditional accounts of the healing of blind men by Jesus".[3]

Hoskyns adds to the complexity of factors which produced the

---

1 Ibid., pages 38-44.
2 E.C. Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, Revised Ed., 1947, page 362.
3 Ibid., page 362.

miracle story when he explains that it existed also within the context of the Messianic Hope. He points out the presence in the Marcan accounts of the healing of the deaf stammerer (Mark 7:31-37) and the restoration of sight to the blind man (8:22-26) of the picture of Jesus as a wonder worker acting according to the common manipulative fashion and conventionalized method of cure of that day. But he also points out that Mark, in spite of the contemporary form of action, draws the attention of the reader wholly elsewhere, namely, to the Messianic significance of the healing: "It is clear, both from Mark and from the common source of Matthew and Luke, that the general Tradition regarded these miracles of healing and exorcism as messianic, that is, as fulfilling Old Testament prophecies of the Messianic age."[1]

Vincent Taylor also takes part in this expanding view of miracle. In Richardson's work the view of miracle is expanded as a result of his interpretation through the two-fold principle that the Miracle Story is a part of the teaching of the early Church and, as such, that it is an interpretation of certain events as having Messianic significance. In Taylor's arguments there appears a more conscious desire to expand the view of miracle and he sets out two areas of thought and one methodological approach as the determining elements in the solution of the problems created by the presence in history of the miraculous event. These areas are: one, world view, in which Taylor includes philosophy and science and holds that in view of the changes in these fields within the last fifty years there is no dogma in either to stand in the way of miracle; two, the estimate of the Person of Christ; and three, the methodological approach of historical criticism by which the historic event and its

---

[1] E.Hoskyns, N. Davey, The Riddle of the New Testament, 1931, pages 162-177, quotation from pages 166-167.

interpretation in the narrative are shown in their relationship to each other.

Taylor indicates that there is no one solution to the miraculous. He is unsympathetic with the older view of miracle which confined its investigation to either scientific or purely historical methods and he is equally unsympathetic with the approach to miracle through the 'religious' as the simple key. He does not find in the words of Jesus very satisfying instruction about miracle as such: "No words of Jesus forbid, or permit, us to believe that He worked miracles on Nature."[1] This leads him to the Synoptic miracle narratives themselves and he gives credit to Form Criticism which, he believes, has been a guide to the approach to the problem as a method of research which establishes that the miracle story is a distinctive form of narrative and shows by analysis of the narratives that some stories more than others stand near to being the records of eyewitnesses. He also gives credit to the study of parallel features from other religions which has made clear the superiority and distinct place the Christian miracle story gives to faith as opposed to magic. But Form-Criticism and the comparative study of religions brings one, according to Taylor, only to the threshold of the historical problem, the real solution of which depends upon a world-view and a particular estimate of the Person of Christ, along with the use of the principles of historical criticism.

The value of Taylor's suggestions, while they do not contain the world-view itself, nor the estimate of the Person of Christ, but only state principles, is in the manner in which they make so clear the enormous

---

[1] Vincent Taylor, The Formation of the Gospel Tradition; 1933, page 137, italics mine. This quotation appears less radicle within its context in which Taylor is pointing out not that Jesus did not work miracles, but "only that He refused to work them as credentials to His claims." page 138.

complex into which the contemporary trend would fit the miraculous. His view seems to help clear the way for a treatment of miracle which opens up the whole subject of the relationship between God and His creation and avoids the limitations of those explanations which limit miracle to divine incursion or to the boundaries of natural law.

c. A critical attitude which explains the appearance of the miraculous in the Gospels in terms of the belief of the early Church which produced the miracle-story.

This third form of critical account of the appearance of the miraculous element in the Gospels can be described as a synthesis of the two preceding points of view. It admits the truth that the knowledge of the order of creation held by the men both who witnessed and heard about the miracles of Jesus did influence the manner in which the miracle was described, but it is unwilling to confine the source of the problem of miracle exclusively to this lack of scientific knowledge and to rest in the thought that as the knowledge about the nature of things increases, so will miracle come to be explained. This third form of critical attitude toward miracle accepts the expanding view of miracle in its universal and redemptive significance. The problem lies in this: Although this form of explanation accepts miracle in principle, it bases its acceptance upon a belief of the early Church about miracle and either relegates the event itself to a problem in philosophy, or holds it to be lost in the story-form, or rejects the significance of the event entirely and retains only the story.

In E.B. Redlich's exposition of the method of Form-Criticism the

miracle story is related to its total environment, which is to say that it appears in just such form as could be expected in that age. This is an explanation reminiscent of those arguments which made the understanding of miracle relative to the knowledge of the day concerning the natural order. He also points out that the miracle story has its counterpart in pagan religions, but that such a comparison reveals how markedly reserved the Gospel stories appear in contrast to the pagan embellishments of magic and superstition. He points out that although there is a mechanical element to some of the miracles of Jesus which He performed in the absence of faith, or at least, where faith is not mentioned in the story, the tradition was finally recorded that He did rely heavily upon the faith of the healed and was inhibited when met by a lack of faith. It is when Redlich passes from his evaluation of the miracle-story to the miracle-event itself that problems begin to appear which have a bearing upon this study of miracle in the light of the docetic tendency, for he comes to the conclusion that there is no solution to the problem of the historical truth and nature of the miraculous event upon which the miracle-story is built.[1]

Redlich places such an emphasis upon the belief in miracle held by the early Christians that the tendency to substitute the faith of the Church for the historical person of Jesus does appear. He makes these suggestions as the basis of an attitude toward the event behind the miracle-story: The belief in miracle is not necessary to the belief in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Redeemer; in the minds of the Gospel authors there is no distinction made between kinds of miracles; miracles are essentially "acts of One who was sympathetic with suffering and yet came not primarily to heal and to display His power over nature but to redeem mankind."[2] He

---

1 E.B. Redlich, Form Criticism, 1939, pages 115-134.

2 Ibid., page 133.

believes that neither Form-Criticism nor Historical Criticism will be able to solve the historical truth of miracle, and he relegates the problem of the historical truth in miracle to a "problem of philosophy". "All we need to know", he writes, "is that the early Church believed that God had visited and redeemed His people."[1]

The difficulty which this system presents is its attitude toward miracle as offering an option for belief. There are at most three attitudes to be held toward miracle-event: reject the fact of miracle; accept the fact of miracle; or withold belief until further evidence is presented. Redlich will not outrightly reject miracle, and he argues against those form-critics who would. Neither does he accept a particular miracle-event as having taken place in the form related by miracle story. Rather, he witholds judgment and at the same time indicates his position that more evidence will never be presented. According to Redlich the event as such is not only hidden under its narrative form, but is inexplicable and should be set aside for consideration at philosophic leisure and not existential urgency. But does such an option for belief in miracle exist? Is it not possible that in setting aside the miracle-event, there is also set aside much that would shed light upon the nature of Christ's redeeming and revealing work? Redlich's argument can, perhaps, be shown to lead to one form of docetic tendency if it is analysed from the point of view that miracle offers no option for belief and that to substitute the faith of the Church for an historical event is apt to lead to a docetic attitude toward the value of history, matter, this present existence.

Redlich disposes of miracle from the field of critical inquiry by

---

[1] Ibid., page 134, italics mine.

resting his argument upon the belief of the early Church that God had visited His people and had redeemed them. The question is, what was the meaning of this redemptive visit? Does Redlich mean that the redemptive activity of God as recorded by the faith of the early Church can be understood without taking into account the presence of the miracle-event? Evidently he does, for it is the belief of the Church and not the historic event that is important in his system. But this is ultimately to separate, for example, healing from forgiveness and to cast upon redemption a 'spiritual' light which transforms it from redemption in and of history to redemption <u>from</u> history. In regard to the Person of Him who worked miracles, this trend of thought could become so warped as to present an option for belief in the Person of Jesus, for it could well be that Christ of the early Church and not the Jesus of history is present for the faith. Once again, the Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith could become separate persons.[1]

Ultimately, this view which holds that the historical event is veiled, if not lost, by the narrative which records only a belief that some

---

[1] For an example of the Jesus of History-Christ of Faith controversy in New Testament criticism, see Allan Menzies, <u>The Earliest Gospel</u>, 1901. He separates, as having distinctly different views and purposes, the Gospels from the Epistles. According to him, in the Epistles Jesus is represented as the heavenly creature come to earth to redeem and to return to His original abode, but in the Gospels Jesus is pictured without doctrinal presupposition and without a view towards Church use. Menzies in his commentary on St. Mark's Gospel refuses to employ the word <u>miracle</u>: "The idea of a Being who can order anything he likes to happen in an instant, is not found in Mark; Jesus here secures his results by urgent effort and prayer, and sometimes cannot accomplish them at all. I have not used the word 'miracle' in this commentary, as it appears to me quite inappropriate to describe the 'powers' Jesus is here described as accomplishing." (page 52) He further writes, in connection with Mark 4:39: "Mark no doubt means to represent Jesus as having had power over the winds and waves, but that power is not claimed by Jesus himself; it belongs to the interpretation afterwards put on his words and demeanour. The Church early came to think that Jesus could do all things for his followers, and that when they had him they were safe from every storm." (page 120).

event did happen might produce a form of religious solipsism. It could develop along this pattern: Christianity is a faith not so much in a historical Person and event as in the belief of the Church about a Person and event. The next step would be to argue that since the Faith is primarily 'spiritual' it cannot be nurtured or communicated by individuals or by a community such as the visible Church, nor is it applicable to the events and situations of 'this life'. The final step towards this religious solipsism would be to claim such a direct 'spiritual' relationship of 'faith' with God through the Christ of Faith that all persons and events are excluded and one must in his 'religious' life either withdraw from the world to mystical contemplation or live in the world but with the conviction that 'faith' and 'this life' have no point of contact.

The docetic tendency which displays itself here as a tendency to 'spiritualize' the Faith should not obscure the important truth that it was primarily the faith of the early Church which caused the miracle-story to be retained as an account of a miraculous event. New Testament critics have suggested several motives by which the early Church was led to retain the miracle-story in the Gospels and the following section describes some of these suggestions in the light of the docetic tendency.

d. Some critical accounts of the presence of the miracle-stories in terms of various motives which prompted their inclusion in the Gospels.

In his book, Jesus the Messiah, William Manson follows the form-critical design of New Testament Criticism which leads him to a conclusion about the relationship of miracle-story to miracle-event that is very similar to that of Redlich. Manson, however, introduces the important

subject of <u>why</u> the Gospel authors included the miracle-story in their testimony to Christ. In a section where he is comparing miracle-story with pronouncement, Manson writes: "... while the original form of a pronouncement of Jesus may be reckoned upon to preserve itself within reasonable limits in the tradition, it is difficult if not altogether impossible to recover the fact lying behind the tradition of the miracle-act.".[1] According to Manson the present significance of the miracle-story lies not in the miraculous event which it records, but in the motive by which its account was passed through tradition and was recorded as evidence of a divine power which overshadowed Jesus. He argues that although the free development which characterizes all such narratives precludes the recovery of the nature of the original event, it is certain that "the evangelical tradition was stamped from the beginning with the sense that the God of Israel was with Jesus, making His sovereign power and glory known".[2]

The usual answer to the question <u>why</u> the miracle-story was included by the Gospel authors is that it was put there to teach something about the Person and Work of Jesus. <u>What</u> it teaches is the subject of the last two sections of this chapter on Sign and World-View, but a comparison between A. Richardson and V. Taylor, L. Hodgson and C.J. Wright will illustrate how varied is the expression of this teaching motivation as New Testament critics use it to explain the presence of the miraculous in the Gospels.

Alan Richardson locates the problem of the miracle-stories in the

---

[1] William Manson, <u>Jesus the Messiah</u>, 1943, page 43.
[2] <u>Ibid.</u>, pages 43-46.

question, "Why did the earliest missionaries preach the miracle-stories?"[1] They were preached, he answers, because of their unique teaching value, and were set down by the Gospel authors as "the materials to be used by Christian preachers and teachers in their presentation of the Gospel".[2] Richardson holds that in all four Gospels this motivation is consistent in each of the miracle-stories which "represent the truth of the Gospel, the truth about Jesus and the Apostles, as the Church understood it, even though they are not to be regarded as necessarily accurate recordings of specific historical happenings".[3] The truth presented by the miracle-stories is, according to Richardson, Christ as the power of God. In each Gospel this truth is expressed in relation to the particular situation to which the Gospel is addressed and in the Fourth Gospel this truth, implicit in the first three, is made explicit in the higher Christology of the long discourses. To summarize a very long argument, the miracles were included in the Gospel narratives in order to teach a truth about a Person whose miracles were feats of supernatural power and not merely the symbols which any prophet might have executed. Messianic significance is attached to each miracle-story.[4]

In the work of Vincent Taylor the teaching motive is again presented as an explanation for the inclusion in the Gospel narrative of the miracle-story. In his opinion they were included to illustrate the beneficent and compassionate works of Jesus in which faith is either mentioned or presupposed on the part of the suppliant. Taylor holds that if these stories are interpreted as first having been told as proofs of the

---

1 Alan Richardson, The Miracle-Stories of the Gospels, 1941, page 35.
2 Ibid., page 100.
3 Ibid., page 111.
4 Ibid., pages 123-138.

Messiaship and divine might of Jesus, the earlier tradition and synoptic portrayal of the humanity of Jesus is seriously compromised.[1]

Taylor and Richardson agree as to the function of the miracle-story; it was included as a teaching device. The difference between the two lies in their expressions of this function, for where Richardson makes use of Messianic terminology, in which the miracle-story is used to help unveil the role of Jesus as Messiah, Taylor uses such terms as beneficent and compassionate to describe the Person of the miracle-story. The question then becomes, what is the relationship between compassionate sympathy on one hand and the role of the Messiah on the other? The former may move off in the humanist direction, while the latter, the Messiahship terminology, may move off in the direction of 'sign' and 'symbol' and to some extent escape the reality of an historical event. How these two can be reconciled is the problem of the Sign and World-View sections of the chapter. The problem, at its foundation, remains the old question of how to state the humanity and divinity in such a way that they may exist together in one Person.

A comparison between E. C. Hoskyns and C.J. Wright also reveals agreement as to the teaching function of the miracle-story, but the purpose of the teaching is given a different interpretation by each of these authors. Hoskyns writes in The Fourth Gospel; "The purpose of the

---

[1] Vincent Taylor, The Formation of the Gospel Tradition, 1933, pages 132-134.

Evangelist is to lay bare the theological foundations of the observable history of Jesus, not to impose a 'Johannine' interpretation upon it."[1] Accordingly, the importance of the historical miracle in the Fourth Gospel is "to portray the nature of Jesus and to make manifest the long-awaited Messianic intervention of God". Hoskyns interprets the motive behind the Fourth Gospel as a desire to defend the Christian principle that history has a theological foundation against Jewish materialism and Gnostic supernaturalism.[2] C.J. Wright, however, states that in developing the miracle-story St. John chose and altered from a considerable body of stories about Jesus "in order to bring into more striking relief the spiritual significance of Jesus and the nature of the Mission He accomplished."[3] Wright is of the opinion that although St. John did insist upon the evidential value of the historical event, he allegorizes that event in the miracle-story in his desire to unfold the primarily spiritual ministry of Jesus.

Thus, with all their apparent agreement about the teaching motive behind the inclusion by St. John of the miracle-story and the use of this story to point to the Person and Mission of Jesus the Messiah, there is even so a considerable difference in outlook between these two

---

1 E.C. Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, 1947, page 255. For an entirely different point of view on the relation of miracle to the historical-theological question, see James Drummond, Studies in Christian Doctrine, 1908, pages 170-177, where he argues that although God can freely work miracles as He choses to do so, it is possible that within the limited range of our experience, He has always proceeded by the same steadfast methods that 'miraculous' is not properly the description of his constant activity. "Presented in this way, the enquiry [into miracles], though involving most important and fundamental issues, is historical rather than theological." This is a tendency to refuse to admit the historical-theological tension of the Fourth Gospel.

2 E. Hoskyns, N. Davey, The Riddle of the New Testament, 1931, page 172 ff.

3 C.J. Wright in H.D.A. Major, T.W. Manson, C.J. Wright, The Mission and Message of Jesus, 1937, page 690.

authors. Hoskyns finds in the Fourth Gospel an awareness of the need to bring before the people of St. John's and all time the tension between event and its significance, between history and eternity, a tension which is expressed most clearly in the Person of Jesus. Wright avoids, to some extent, this tension and understands the Fourth Gospel as emphasizing the spiritual, which would be to Hoskyns a one-sided interpretation which would omit the tension between spiritual and material, divine and human. This section concludes the brief survey of critical attitudes toward miracle which has pointed out how the critical approach toward miracle may be a key to the critic's Christology and Christian philosophy. These problems have been continually present: the relationship between event in history and the divine significance of the event; the relationship between miracle as 'sign' and as compassionate act; and the problem which sums up all the contradictions, and which is so clearly defined by Hoskyns, the tension between the historical and theological, the human and the divine, the 'this world' and the 'spiritual world'. The Person of Christ is the key to the understanding of these tensions, and the understanding is made both easier and more difficult by the fact that in Him the tension is so supremely present as He appears to the faithful as God-man.

The position of Leonard Hodgson on miracle affords a conclusion to this and an introduction to the wider view of miracle itself to be undertaken in the following sections. He writes that neither the belief in the occurrence of miracle as the result of the Godhead of Christ, nor the belief in the Godhead of Christ through the occurrence of miracles offers a satisfactory account of miracle. The attitude toward miracle, according to Hodgson, must coincide with a world-view and can be neither the expression of dogma on the Person of Christ nor a convenient

explanation of an isolated historical event: "The historical question of the occurrence of the Gospel miracles cannot be considered apart from philosophical reflection on their possibility, and that philosophical reflection must include discussion of the nature of Him in whose life they are said to have occurred."[1]

II. Miracle as sign with Messianic significance; a challenge to relate miracle to world-view.

The general tenor of the Criticism surveyed is that miracle does not stand alone as pure event but lies within a context from which strands recede into the past and proceed into the future. Within this context which looks back to the prophets and forward to the dawning of a new age, miracle and sign become almost synonymous. The problems arising out of this particular approach to miracle are due to the variety of meanings attached to sign.

As sign, miracle receives a competent treatment only when set in as large a context as Redemption and World-view. The meaning of miracle and the words of Jesus which accompany it has been expressed thus: "By His words Jesus gave to His actions the strictest theological setting and thereby gave to the world and to all human action their final meaning."[2] Only this boldness which makes miracle touch "the world and all human action" can protect miracle study from betraying a tendency to abstract miracle into pure symbol possessing little or no historical value as event.

When sign is given a meaning applicable only to a particular period in history or to a particular people, its significance for future

---

1 Leonard Hodgson, And was Made Man, 1933, pages 111-122, quotation from page 119.
2 E.C. Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, 1947, page 285.

ages may become lost and in the long run it may become merely empty symbol preserved out of regard for tradition. A tendency in this direction is present in A. S. Peake's description of miracle as event calling attention to a new revelation given by God to mankind. The miracles were this new revelation's "credentials" and attested to it until it could be accepted for its own sake. Peake writes: "From this point of view they [miracles] are a condescension to our weakness, ceasing when the need for them had passed."[1] Peake interprets the feeding of the five thousand as a symbol of the great fact that Christ is the world's bread of life, and the withering fig tree as a foreshadowing of that doom which awaits "hollow profession". Miracles are: "... witnesses to Christ's claims, proofs of His deep compassion, symbols of great spiritual realities" and they are at the same time "prophetic of something which may yet be normal, the manifestation of forces at present held in check for reason that we cannot wholly fathom, but which are ultimately to be released."[2]

In this explanation by Peake, the value of the miraculous in the Gospel is considerably limited when he makes it appear a condescension to man's weakness and something which will pass when the new revelation can stand on its own feet. This fails to find a bridge between the miraculous in the Gospels and the faith of this present time in which the "new revelation" is securely established and does not call for miracle to attest it, except in those difficult arguments which attempt to prove the divinity of Jesus by the miracles He worked. If not attached with any significance to the present the miracle narrative becomes, as it tends to do so in Peake's explanation of miracle, an empty symbol showing only how

---

1 A. S. Peake, Christianity, Its Nature and Its Truth, 1908, page 167.
2 Ibid., page 168.

the revelation was originally attested. Perhaps this bridge from past to present may be implied in Peake's opinion that the Gospel miracles forecasted something "which may yet be normal" and implied that undiscovered forces and powers would some day be harnessed by man's knowledge, but on the whole his interpretation is simply that by miracle a new revelation was attested and by miracle the principle was made clear that God is not limited to the usual "tracks" of His energy which may in the supreme interest of spirit manipulate matter not only in condescension to man's weakness, but make itself known in entirely new modes of action. What this discussion must come to ask eventually is this question; Were miracles a part of the revelation or were they symbols of the relevation?

This question introduces the problem of how to distinguish between and yet relate what is symbol and what is event. A symbol will take its value from the truth it symbolizes; and event has a less relative value and is judged in part at least upon its own merits. When a single incident, such as miracle, is both symbol and significant event, the scales must balance very carefully or the symbolical quality of the incident will rob it of its intrinsic value as event. Applied to a miraculous event this would mean that as the symbolical and historical qualities become off balance, the symbolical quality, if it is the quality over-stressed, will tend to deny miracle its intrinsic quality as an event. In the above treatment of miracle by Peake, the historical miraculous event has value so long as the truth or revelation it symbolizes cannot stand alone. When the truth is perceived for itself, then the value of miracle tends to disappear.

A corrective to this tendency is suggested by H.H. Farmer who

finds in miracle not only a truth to be perceived, but a truth acting. Symbol and event are then nicely balanced. He writes: "miracle, therefore, is not an external attestation of divine revelation, but is that in and through which the divine revelation is given; it is the intrinsic symbol which at one and the same time is constituted, yet also transcended, by the reality it mediates."[1]

Peake indicates that there is in miracle a proof of the compassion of Jesus and a symbol of great spiritual verities such as forgiveness of sins. It is in this Biblical setting that miracle is most clearly seen to be "that in and through which the divine revelation is given." In this setting miracle points directly to the Person of Christ and to the age He inaugurated. It points to Him as Messiah and opens the question of the new order, for in miracle "men could discern the manifest signs that the old order was breaking up; and in a little while God would achieve His victory." The powers belonging to the new age had in fact appeared in the new age.[2] Miracles show forth Christ as the chosen of God, attended by the power of God, and as one "whose acts are the manifestation of the day of salvation", whose Person connects the revelation of God and the wonders of the Kingdom.[3]

So to attach Messianic significance to the miracles of Christ can be a first step toward enlarging the context in which miracles are set and to see in them a summing up of the redemptive message of the Bible. How

---

1 H.H. Farmer, The World and God, 1935, page 110, the quotation continues: "(His, in Hunzinger's phrase, "the phenomenal form (Erscheinungsform) of divine revelation"."

2 E.F. Scott, The Kingdom and The Messiah, 1911, page 115.

3 William Manson, Jesus the Messiah, 1943, page 35; see also H.D.A. Major in Major, Manson, Wright, The Mission and Message of Jesus, 1937, pages 34-39.

the context is enlarged can be seen in the works of several authors. A.C. Headlam and E.F. Scott attach this Messianic significance to the miracles as a result of their examination of the attitude of Jesus toward miracle with an optimism which asserts the possibility of going behind the embellishments of the miracle-story to the mind of Jesus. The outcome of their argument is that Jesus connected the gift of power not so much with Himself as with the age about to dawn and that for Him miracles were signs that the dominion of Satan was not only to be broken but was now yielding. The miracles were to Jesus additional signs of the reality of His divine mission as Son of Man.[1] Miracle study must thus relate to "the age about to dawn", the dominion of Satan, the divine mission of Jesus, and the criptic title, Son of Man. This is a considerably wider outlook upon miracle than the study which would confine itself to an attempt to understand miracle through 'natural law' and is a movement toward the study of miracle in terms of world-view.

William Manson is one of the group of authors who would enlarge the study of miracle to include this world-view. He makes use of the Messianic nature of the miracles and points out that as sign, miracle finds meaning as it is placed within the framework of the Old Testament. Manson writes that the Gospel narratives inherited the early form of Christian Kerygma in which Jesus is accredited by appeal neither to His divine truth in teaching nor to the transcendent greatness of the quality of His Person, but rather, the appeal is made externally and phenomenally "by the halo of divine signs attending him and authenticating him to Israel as the Deliverer sent by God."[2]

---

[1] A.C. Headlam, The Miracles of the New Testament, 1914, pages 314-315.
[2] William Manson, Jesus the Messiah, 1943, page 34.

E.C. Hoskyns and N. Davey also set the work and person of Jesus in a Messianic framework in their appeal to the Old Testament parables and prophecies to explain New Testament miracles.[1] The stilling of the storm they find framed in the thought of Psalm 65:7; the walking on the water has its beginning form in Job 9:8; and the feeding of the thousands set in a desert place recalls the miraculous feeding of the Israelites in the desert and the constant expectation of a great feast of the Messianic Age when "the meek should eat and be satisfied". The manipulation and contact used by Jesus in His cures is "the effective representation of the true Messianic Salvation which is the lifting up of men through contact with the Messiah". The cleansing of the leper who is sent to the priests and the healing of the blind stammerer are also set in terms of Old Testament prediction (Isaiah 35:3-6). These and other examples lead Hoskyns and Davey to conclude that miracles are the signs of the supreme "Messianic Miracle, the rescue of men from the grip of the powers of evil -- from sin. The supreme Messianic Miracle to which the miracles point is the salvation of men by the power of the living God exercised through the agency of the Messiah."[2] Thus miracle is interpreted as setting forth in the Gospels both the nature of what will take place and the present work of Him whom they authenticate.

Alan Richardson treats miracle similarly to Hoskyns and Davey and for the greater part of his work is not unique in his interpretation of miracle. He shares with many others this idea of the Messianic import of miracle in which miracle is seen as a part of the whole redemptive message. However, when he treats those miracles that seem to rely on word only, with no manipulation or formal activity on the part of Jesus, he injects a new

---

1 E.C. Hoskyns, N. Davey, The Riddle of the New Testament, 1931, pages 162 ff.
2 Ibid., page 169.

note into miracle study. To anyone familiar with the Old Testament, Richardson argues, it is immediately obvious that the power of the word of Jesus demonstrates His participation in the creative power of God, who both made and rules the world by the word of His mouth. "The significance of the fact that Jesus shares with God the Characteristic mode of His creative activity cannot be overstressed." Jesus used symbolical actions as vehicles for teaching; He looked upon His miracles as prophetic signs, but the miracle stories of the Gospels were not later creations based upon what were originally symbolical acts alone — this would be to move into 19th Century rationalism and away from a Biblical atmosphere.[1] The miracles were a present creative and redemptive act of God.

When miracle is set in a context as large as the Gospel message itself by a criticism that does not relegate it to mere form or insignificant event, and by an interpretation that places the idea of miracle within the total redemptive framework of the Bible, miracle points to Jesus as being neither a symbol of a universal tendency toward incarnation nor a divine act breaking in totally from above. The former idea of incarnation leads to a humanism which forgets the transcendent and living God; the latter creates an absolute separation between God and His world in which the idea of divine love in creation becomes impossible and "leaves human nature as such irredeemable, and proves divine grace to be a self-contradiction".[2]

If the miraculous acts of Jesus are to be more than pictures painted to conform to a past and to predict a future, they must be regarded as the creative revealing acts of God in time and history. If it is true

---

1 A. Richardson, The Miracle Stories of the Gospels, 1941, pages 52-58.
2 O.C. Quick, The Gospel of Divine Action, 1933, page 110.

that these miracles have a significance for what they were as events which took place and were recorded, and if it is true that they do "cast a clear and penetrating light on the whole dark mystery of outward evil in human life" which fled before Jesus, then "they are not external evidence of the revelation, but a part of the revelation itself".[1] Miracle both reveals, is the product of, and is God's power. "That God is more near, more real and mighty, more full of love, and more ready to help every one of us than any one of us realises, that is their undying message."[2] This is a message which concerns the total relation of men and the world they live in to God, and it is in the endeavour adequately to express this relationship that the modern struggle with the docetic tendency takes place.

III. Miracle and World-View.

When in the struggle against the docetic tendency miracle begins to be defined not only as sign pointing towards a new age and authenticating Him who is bringing this new age to light, but is defined as the creative revelation and very power of God expressed in His world, there immediately arises the problem of the so-called tension which is said to exist between the natural and the supernatural, the personal and impersonal, the physical and spiritual. Ultimately, this so called tension has to do with the total relationship of man and the world he lives in to God.

H.H. Farmer has pointed out that so to consider miracle as the creative revelation of God is to see in miracle a supernatural quality, but

---

1 D.S. Cairns, The Faith that Rebels, 3rd (Revised) edition, 1929, pages 243-244.

2 Ibid., page 247.

supernatural neither in the sense of a reality separated from the natural nor momentarily suspending its 'laws', but a supernatural quality which is above the natural order, ruling it "to the ends of a personal kingdom in which man is called to have a part". He writes that so to consider miracle is to be aware of God as Active Will who so thrusts "absolute demand" and "proffered succour" into the real and personal world-situation in such a way that there is called forth an attitude of wonder and awe -- not an astonishment at the mysterious or unusual in nature, "but the wonder which is appropriate and peculiar to the apprehension of the divine". Farmer admits that there is no intellectual proof of that quality of an event which makes it miraculous to the religious mind, but that the wonder and awe is wonder and awe at the very nature of things.[1]

It has been pointed out earlier in this chapter on miracle how there was once prevalent the idea that the very nature of things could adequately be described and explained through the statement of 'natural law'. Many of the 'laws' once confidently stated have been seriously questioned, if not successfully controverted, and the 'law of nature' argument has to some extent fallen into disrepute. There is, however, one development of recent years which tends to continue the argument that the nature of man, if not of the entire world, is self-explanatory. The term natural law has given way to the term psychological law which is stated, in its theological implications, thus: "... nature at its highest and best is always the manifestation of God's character as He reveals Himself to us, and is also the indication of His will for our further development."[2] Miracle set in this context is explained as the action of

---

1 H.H. Farmer, The World and God, 1935, pages 111-116.

2 Lily Dougall, "God in Action", The Spirit, B.H. Streeter, ed., 1935, pages 32, 33.

God by which the latent powers of the human being are evoked. This is an action of God which does not overpower or set aside 'natural law' but works through the processes which are described by psychological law.

In this argument according to psychological law, God remains the prime-mover in the chain of natural sequence just as He was prime-mover in the 'law of nature' arguments. But so to account for miracle is to continue to describe it in terms of law and to restrict the explanation of the miraculous to one level of existence, the 'natural' level. This explanation of the miraculous through the statement of law tends toward that dualism which, if it does not separate God from His world completely, admits one point of contact only and that when God acts as prime-mover at the beginning of the natural sequence. Ultimately, this position will separate the Jesus of History from the Christ of Faith, will deny the truth of the Incarnation which was God in Christ not merely as prime-mover but at <u>all</u> times, and so tend towards a form of docetism.

There is another approach which has been made in the attempt to describe the miraculous within a world-view in which the Uniformity of Nature is given as a legitimate premise which sheds light upon the nature of miracle. According to this principle, events which take place in the natural order follow a uniform pattern which is dependent upon the presence of uniform or constant factors operating within the natural order. A change of one of the factors or the introduction of a new factor will produce a non-uniform result. It is argued that Christianity is this New Factor which appeared at a particular time in history and was accompanied by unique occurrences which neither had been nor could have experienced prior to this time. The New Factor of Christianity brought

about a change in human nature.[1] Where H.W. Robinson makes use of this new factor or change in the order of things in his account of the miraculous he writes that man has from earliest times observed an order and uniformity about him which has made it possible for him metaphorically to describe the uniformity in the terms of law. In the miraculous, however, there is evidence of a "super-human world actively concerned with the material world" which cooperates with the law of nature either from within or without and introduces new factors, creates, changes the order of things through both individual incidence and through comprehensive control.[2]

This argument according to 'new factor' helps to preserve the truth that God is not His world and that His world is not God. It describes neither the natural nor supernatural as self-enclosed orders, but allows for free access and open communication between them by which these two orders become one order, God's order, in which a transcendent and immanent God is creatively at work. This creative activity is revelation. In miracle it is revelation of the same quality as what is called general revelation in nature, but it is revelation in an intense degree. The most intense revelation of God is Christ, whose very incarnation is dependent upon "the vital and intimate relation of His Person and Work to all the factors of history, past, present, and future."[3]

Thus miracles are neither contrary to nature nor a slight on its every day working. They are not magic, but witness to the same source from which proceeds the power in nature and testify to this truth:

---

1 A.C. Headlam, The Miracles of the New Testament, 1914, page 110.
2 H.W. Robinson, Redemption and Revelation, 1942, page 122.
3 Ibid., page 178.

"Nature's ways are God's ways; that in other words, the natural is the supernatural mode of working". They signify the supremacy of the spiritual forces over the merely material, meaningless and evil, and they point to a victory that takes place in the same order of things in which the meaningless and evil reside. Embodied immortality, the Incarnation, Sacraments, the external Forms of worship, the Church -- all are founded upon a correlativity of spiritual and phenomenal in which miracle takes its place as one of the ways in which the relation of the Father to His universe is expressed, a relationship much the same as that revealed through the faith of Jesus in God's fatherly providence and mighty power to see His purposes through and ensure success to His cause in the world.[1]

Although miracle does reveal the correlativity and co-existence of the phenomenal and spiritual, the New Testament miracles were the interference in a realm in which the power and goodness of God were most inadequately expressed, "while the interfering realm was one in which His omnipotence and grace were mediated without let or hindrance". This implies a barrier within the natural order, and not between natural and supernatural. "And this barrier itself is unnatural or anomalous; it is as it were, a pathological phenomenon." Redemption is the piercing of this barrier which can be dissolved by faith.[2]

This last statement points toward the conclusion to which this

---

[1] R.C. Trench, The Miracles of Our Lord, 1908, page 23; J. Mackinnon, The Historic Jesus, 1931, pages 372-373, with footnotes; A.C. Headlam, The Miracles of the New Testament, 1914, page 335; G. Tyrell, Christianity at the Cross-Roads, 1909, "... the spiritual utters itself in, and is addressed through, the phenomenal; that they are as inseparable as subject and objects; that pure spirit is a pure abstraction." page 208; J. Moffatt, The Theology of the Gospels, 1912, page 89.

[2] A.G. Hogg, Redemption from this World, 1922, pages 135-137.

chapter is drawing. While any explanation of miracle which by one means or another separates into exclusive orders the natural and supernatural is in danger of seriously devaluating the reality of the Incarnation and its meaning for this existence, it is by no easy explanation such as immanence or natural consequence or psychological law that the danger is overcome. It must boldly be asserted that the barrier within nature is real, evil, productive of meaninglessness to life and is to be overcome only through faith. Faith provides the insight into the order of things by which the coexistence within the same order of the natural and supernatural, the phenomenal and spiritual is to be seen.

Faith is the principle of miracle. It is the principle by which Jesus worked miracles, that is, through His own faith; it is the principle by which miracle was received, that is, through the faith of the healed; it is the principle by which the faithful today understand miracle; and it is the principle by which a total existence, once meaningless without faith, is miraculously born anew into meaningfulness.

Jesus <u>faithfully</u> worked miracles as signs, as works of human faith through which "'the powers of the world to come' are brought right into the conditions of human life on earth".[1] Even when considered as works of the spirit, the miracles are works wrought by the Spirit through the faith of Jesus. This faith of Jesus was the essential key which unlocked for men to see the treasures of God's sovereign reality, His fatherly love, His perfect freedom to help men, and as such a key, the faith of Jesus was the revelation of man's life as God meant it to be.[2] The question arises as to how this faith was mediated to Jesus. If it was not an inherent quality of His metaphysical divinity but was a contingent quality of His

---

1 D.M. Baillie, <u>God Was In Christ</u>, 1948, page 14.
2 D.S. Cairns, <u>The Faith that Rebels</u>, 1929, pages 93,95,223,76,84.

perfect humanity, what kind of faith was it? A.G. Hogg suggests that it was a faith born of a uniquely intimate knowledge of the Father.

According to Hogg there are two types of energy. One type is evident on the merely material side of the barrier within the natural order. Men harness this type because it is familiar and intelligible. The second type is that redemptive energy of a greater force, the work of God from a greater natural order beyond the barrier. Hogg writes that a confiding appeal to this latter form of energy is the only practical attitude in relation to the supernatural or redemptive. However, the faith that releases this cosmic energy of God's "pent-up fullness" must be more than confident appeal, expectant receptiveness, or practical loyalty. This type of faith is the sufficient and primary condition for the miraculous event to take place, for example, in the answer to prayer, but it is not sufficient for "a <u>specific</u> supernatural occurrence <u>at a given time and with a particular redemptive purpose</u>" which was the character of the miracles of Jesus and is the essence of miracle-working. Miracle-working faith is present in "the attitude of one who counts on being supernaturally enabled to accomplish a seeming impossibility, which he knows to be no private ambition but the one specific service which God here and now requires of him". This attitude takes its standard from an independent knowledge of God's call and purpose, as distinct from the standard of what is practicable from past experience. This attitude in Jesus was born of a unique and intimate knowledge of the Father.[1]

Just as faith is the principle by which miracle is accomplished so it is the principle by which the miraculous is received and recognized for what it is. As faith is the primary condition for miraculous healing,

---

1 A.G. Hogg, <u>Redemption from this World</u>, 1922, pages 71, 139-150.

so it is the primary condition of 'sight', and only by miraculous sight is miracle seen to be revelation and revelation seen to be reconciliation. This revelation in miracle is not God making plain what He had failed to make quite clear before the Incarnation, not a deficit in revelation made up by the sending of someone "from behind the scenes", but is a new, creative dealing with "the alienation which can see no gracious revelation of God to us in any manifestation." And all of this sight-giving takes place within the area of God's moral purpose, history.[1]

A statement which defines this concept of miracle as revelation, and as revelation reconciliation and redemption, is contained in H.H. Farmer's The World and God: "Whatever ambiguous shades of meaning may continue to attach to the word, speaking generally a miracle for the religious mind is pre-eminently an event in which God is apprehended as entering succouringly into a situation. ... the more intensely personal and individual the succour of God is felt to be, the more appropriate and inevitable the word miracle becomes on the religious man's lips."[2] The intensity with which the believer feels the succour of God is dependent upon a personal relation of the believer to the redeeming Christ, the Incarnate One, of such a nature that his whole world finds meaning and is supported by God's creative event within history. In so far as the believer is involved in an intensely personal relation with the Incarnate Christ, so he is involved in an intense relation with the world.

This intense relation to the world through Christ has been a fundamental principle of the Cosmic Christology which was once expressed by H.R. MacIntosh, became a part of the "I-Thou" terminology of M. Buber, and now is interpreted by A. Galloway in The Cosmic Christ. This Cosmic

---

1 John Oman, Grace and Personality, 1919, 2nd edition, rev., pages 152-162.
2 H.H. Farmer, The World and God, 1935, pages 116, 118, italics omitted.

Christology may one day be recognized as the outstanding contribution of the past fifty years to the interpretation of miracle in the struggle with the docetic tendency.

In this approach to Christology, everything depends upon a personal encounter with Christ. As Incarnate, He entered into the realm of man's experience. "He belongs therefore to the realm of "things" -- to the realm of "It". Yet since in Him the integrity of the Ultimate Intrinsic Meaning remained unimpaired by the structure of "It", we meet him only as "Thou". In this sense the first disciples, who knew Him in the flesh, have no advantage over us who know only that He was in the flesh. The encounter with the Ultimate "Thou" is in both cases essentially the same. When we have encountered Him as "Thou" nothing is added to His Meaning by our being able to grasp Him as an "It" within experience."[1]

An illustration of the "It" and "Thou" is afforded in the feeding of the multitude by Jesus in the course of which the bread, which was just bread, "It", was so given personal meaning that it could be confronted with personal response. Indeed, it called forth and demanded response. From a neutral "It" to the eyes of the multitude, the bread in a real sense took on "Thou" qualities in so far as it called forth response, either positive or negative. In its larger significance the whole episode of the Feeding, or whenever Jesus broke bread, was the miraculous transformation of neutral matter and daily experience into challenging and meaningful existence. The healings by Jesus, the restoration of sight to the blind, above all, the bringing to life of the dead, were the transformation from "It" to "Thou" and a miraculous creation

---

[1] A.D. Galloway, The Cosmic Christ, 1951, page 250.

of something full of purpose and meaning out of that which had been dull and void of meaning, evil. Faith healing today shares this quality with New Testament healing as a part of the reconciliation God worked in Christ who is Lord of heaven and earth. Only by encounter with Christ and the confession of His rule over all things is anything changed from an "It" into "Thou".[1]

This resting of everything upon a personal encounter with Christ does not deny value to all else; it fulfills it: "Personal redemption and cosmic redemption are not two separate things, the one subjective and the other objective. They are correlative aspects of one and the same thing. The objectivity of both consists in the objectivity of the event wherein they are accomplished."[2]

What in the Introduction to this thesis was pointed out as the dualism that leads to the condemnation of matter and this life and, in the end, leads to a denial of the Incarnation, A. Galloway defines as the tension between the personal and the impersonal. He argues that this tension cannot remain in suspension with the physical treated as an indifferent factor or "as the mere stage and setting of the drama of personal redemption". It must either be condemned as in itself evil or

---

1 Ibid., pages 229-230. The personal and impersonal in New Testament demonology is made us of by Galloway to explain the "It" and "Thou" terminology. He explains that the New Testament demoniacs were neither personal creatures who inhabited nature, nor impersonal evil any more than 'holy' means personal righteousness, but were sub-personal spirits. They were sub-personal in form and super human in power, a force too great to control and yet devoid of meaning. The demoniac is not impersonal; thus it calls forth response. "It tempts us to accept the meaninglessness of the world and to abandon ourselves to it, either accepting the destruction of self in subjection to sub-personal influence both of inward desire and outward pressure, or by a tyrannical assertion of self against all that is not-self without any regard to the intrinsic value of personal life."

2 Ibid., pages 238-240.

else it must be brought within the scope of the redemptive act.[1] Matter, all physical existence, are brought within this scope when a person enters into a personal relationship with the world as a result of the personal encounter with Christ.

This concept of Cosmic Christology suggests a key to the whole problem of miracle. It denies any impersonal solution to the problems involved in miracle study which would describe the miraculous solely in terms of past event, or solely in terms of religious culture of a particular period, or solely in terms of the analysis of literary form. This Cosmic Christology does not confine the solution of miracle to a 'full' explanation of the system of the natural world, neither is it content to place miracle solely on the plane of 'spiritual' living, nor to explain miracle as a divine incursion into this world by some totally-other Power. Cosmic Christology boldly asserts miracle as being the result of God's succour actively entering into personal, historical existence in the Person of Christ who, as the Incarnate One in whom God summed up and gathered together all things, has continued His redeeming work of making meaningful that which bears no meaning, of making real the correlation between physical, material, spiritual and personal.

However, as key to the whole problem of miracle Cosmic Christology endeavours to unlock the secret of miracle only to open up the whole range of Christology, for who is this from whom all things take their meaning? In what larger setting could miracle be placed than this, that the whole world has meaning, but only in relation to Christ? Miracle is the event in which God through Christ is giving meaning to life and pointing out that all life can have meaning. Through this explanation of

---

[1] Ibid., page 205.

the miraculous the dualistic-docetic tendency in the struggle against docetism is overcome, and it has set the scene for the next phase of the struggle, that scene in which Christ appears -- as divine? or as human? or as one Person, human and divine?

Chapter III.

THE TEMPTATIONS AND SINLESSNESS OF JESUS IN THEIR RELATION TO THE STRUGGLE WITH THE DOCETIC TENDENCY

Introduction

Of the many different ways in which miracle is interpreted, the most helpful to a study of the struggle with the docetic tendency has been that which describes miracle in the terms of a view of the world in which all things ultimately derive their meaning from the person of Christ. This, however, does not solve the problem of the nature of the person of Christ as He is described in this struggle to maintain His humanity and divinity.

The subject of this present chapter is the description of the person of Christ in terms of temptation and sinlessness. That He was tempted and sinless raises the problems of how to avoid the docetic tendency and state the temptations of Jesus as real temptations and the sinlessness in terms other than an inherent, substantial attribute of Christ which would tend not only to deny the reality of the temptations but would eventually deny the real humanity of Jesus. The problem of how to state temptation and sinlessness together cannot be solved by relegating the temptations to the humanity of Jesus and the sinlessness to His divinity, for this is to divide Him into two persons and His life into an alternating display of humanity and divinity. Neither can it be solved by describing His sinlessness and victory over temptation as a supreme act of human will, for this is to make the New Testament anthropocentric. Neither

can it be solved by describing the person of Jesus as One who "possessed plenary powers or lived in the light of an open vision of His glory". A pointer towards the solution of these problems may lie in this statement which appears in The Riddle of the New Testament: "The Action of the Living God, which took place in a single human life, carried with it no spectacular display of supernatural power. For in the end, and here the New Testament authors speak with united voice, the Action of God took place in complete humiliation and in what appeared to be remarkable weakness. The supreme Act of God occurred not in one who possessed plenary power or lived in the light of an open vision of His glory; it occurred in human faith and temptation and in a single, isolated Figure."[1] Somehow, temptation and sinlessness occurred together in a human life of obedience and dependence which was the human life of Him who at all times was the Son of God, the Only Begotten, the Messiah and Saviour of the world.

To treat the subject of temptation and sinlessness this chapter is divided into three parts: The first, a review of several interpretations of the Gospel story of the Temptations which illustrate the variety of ways in which temptation is accounted for in the sinless life of Jesus and which also serves as an introduction to the second section in which the juxtaposition of temptation and sinlessness in the life of Jesus in its more explicitly Christological significance is analysed. Third, a section which reviews some of the ways in which the sinlessness of Jesus has been stated and suggests a solution for the explanation of the sinlessness of Jesus in the struggle with the docetic tendency.

---

1 E.C. Hoskyns, N. Davey, The Riddle of the New Testament, 1931, pages 252-256.

I. The Temptation Stories of the Gospels.

The Baptism of Jesus is usually interpreted as a prelude to the Temptations which immediately followed it. This is true in the work both of those who believe the Temptations occurred in the chronological sequence given in the Gospels and those who believe they are a compressed summary of the nature of the entire ministry of Jesus. The provoking question stimulated by this prelude to temptation is why did Jesus go to John to be baptized? If this were a baptism of repentence, of what did Jesus have need of repentence, and if it was not a baptism of repentence, was it merely the fulfilling in public of an ordinance by an act the symbolism of which only Jesus was fully aware?

James Drummond expresses the view that from the narrative of the Baptism it is not necessary to suppose that Jesus was "conscious of any guilty course of life which He was called upon to renounce. But unless he had some consciousness of weakness and dependence, some of those feelings which belong to us only as imperfect and liable to sin, as beings who must be humble before the infinite holiness of God, it is difficult to understand his submission to an ordinance so expressly implicated with an acknowledgment of moral infirmity. This view, that apart from any sense of guilt, he felt the need of inward renewal and uplifting, is confirmed by his habit of solitary prayer;....."[1] But the Baptism of Jesus possesses far greater significance than indicated by the terms "inward renewal". Drummond's explanation seems only to express that point of view which is desirous of identifying Jesus with

---

[1] James Drummond, Studies in Christian Doctrine, 1908, page 314.

with the rest of humanity, yet with the limitation that "at one essential point there is no evidence of participation by Jesus in the experience of humanity; for He betrays no consciousness of sin".[1]

R. Mackintosh also is among those who endeavour to explain the Baptism so that it fits in with the sinlessness of Jesus. He holds that the Baptism was a rite through which, by ordination of God, Jesus should be linked with sinners, "But which for His own sake could mean nothing to Him". Mackintosh argues that the moment of baptism was one of revelation in which His spotless purity and the sinfulness in all others was made clear. He describes this consciousness of sinlessness as "enclosed within a greater and more positive consciousness -- that of Sonship. And Sonship is neither metaphysical (as in later theology) nor official (as in Jewish Messianic and half-Jewish Adoptionism). It is personal and moral. Supreme and unique in Jesus, it may yet be shared by all. By a sharp paradox of faith He, consciously man in every fibre, knows Himself the world's Saviour and Judge."[2]

When the Baptism is thus described as a rite, it is more the description of an empty identification of Jesus with mankind in the form of condescending divinity than an identification through self-giving humanity. The idea of Baptism as revelation which made clear to Jesus His spotless purity may imply an omniscience difficult to understand in the light of the limited human knowledge of Jesus. H.R. Mackintosh points a way out of the tendency to place too much stress upon the relationship between Baptism and the metaphysical idea of sinlessness as an attribute of Jesus by writing of Baptism in terms of Sonship in an

---

1 James Stalker, The Christology of Jesus, 1899, page 79.
2 R. Mackintosh, Christianity and Sin, 1913, pages 65ff., quotation from page 68.

attempt to express the person of Jesus in terms of relationship with the Father of vocation and human response.[1]

H.J.C. Knight follows the difficult 'self-consciousness' form of argument which holds that Jesus experienced at the Baptism the consciousness that He was the Messiah: "The Baptism marks the point of complete apprehension by the Lord's human mind of the fulness of all that He was, and the function which it was His to fill in the divinely ordered life of the world."[2] Here Knight is involved in some of the same difficulty as Mackintosh when he writes that Jesus was 'conscious' of all that He was and that at the Baptism the end of His life was "clearly and irrevocably fixed". These statements seem to include a tendency to deny to Jesus a truly human and limited knowledge, but Knight's general suggestion is constructive. He believes that in the silent years of Nazareth Jesus learned obedience and so approached the Baptism not as the fatalistic yielding to an overpowering will, but as "such a submission to the personal will of the Father that the doing of that will is the Lord's end and purpose".[3] Again, it is will, response, obedience and submission that offers and explanation of Baptism which in the long run may be the solution to the problems of a sinless One undergoing a Baptism of repentence.

---

1 H.R. Mackintosh, The Person of Jesus Christ, 1912, pages 412 ff, where the author argues for an ethical sinlessness, which must also include the metaphysical element, to replace the older deterministic descriptions of the sinlessness of Jesus as inherent, substantial, and wholly metaphysical.

2 H.J.C. Knight, The Temptation of Our Lord, 1907, pages 12, 13.

3 Ibid., pages 29-31.

G.S. Duncan pursues the explanation of the Baptism in terms of relationship and response and suggests that Jesus came away from His Baptism with Sonship as the basic factor in His consciousness, and with loyalty to this Sonship and loyalty to the Father the fixed guides to His task as it opened out before Him.[1] H.D.A. Major expresses this relationship in terms of the Messianic consciousness of Jesus and holds that it was out of this newly awakened consciousness of Messiahship that the Temptations arose.[2]

What these authors point out, notwithstanding their many differences of opinion as to the nature and degree of the self-consciousness of Jesus, is the sense of mission which gave meaning to His life. This point of view of mission is expressed by A.C. Headlam when he describes the state of mind in which Jesus left the Baptism: "... in such a way as never before He was conscious of His divine power and mission, that He felt, as not previously, that He was the Son of God, the servant summoned for God's work. The Baptism means the Temptation, and the beginning of His ministry. He knew for what He was called."[3]

If it is true that the Baptism of Jesus is best interpreted as that event in which Jesus received an increased sense of mission and an authentication of that mission, then it also follows that the Temptations narrative should reveal the nature of that mission, the struggle with which He was involved in living out that mission, and that they should shed light on the means by which He remained true to His mission unto the

---

[1] G.S. Duncan, Jesus, Son of Man, 1947, pages 112-118.

[2] H.D.A. Major in Major, Manson, Wright, The Mission and Message of Jesus, 1937, pages 26-32.

[3] A.C. Headlam, The Life and Teaching of Jesus The Christ, 1923, page 152.

very end. That the Temptations stories may be a highly compressed account of the struggle which was present throughout the ministry of Jesus and that they may have been told by Jesus as a summary of this struggle at a much later time than they appear in the Gospel narrative, do not impair their value as casting light upon the nature of the person of Christ. Indeed, it is with less difficulty that they are viewed as an account given by Jesus when after His ministry had born fruit He could look back upon it and sum up all His days in this narrative of the Three Temptations than if they are interpreted as an actual experience or narrative of Jesus which took place at the beginning of His ministry and in which He could so perfectly cast Himself in the Messianic role and so perfectly state the nature of His entire ministry which was yet to unfold.

The interpretations of the Gospel narratives of the Temptations which follow this line of mission are divided into two general classes, one of which interprets the message of the Temptations in the terms of the will and knowledge of Jesus Himself, the other which interprets it in terms of the relationship of Jesus to the Father.

a. The interpretation of the Gospel narratives of the Temptations in terms of the will, knowledge, and self-consciousness of Jesus.

According to H.J.C. Knight, Jesus withdrew after the pronouncement by the voice at the Baptism with "purpose and end accepted"; He came forth from the wilderness with "means and laws of action determined".[1] As is

---

[1] H.J.C. Knight, The Temptation of Our Lord, page 52, italics deleted.

true with many other writers on this subject, Knight's argument raises the suspicion that he attributes to Jesus a 'knowledge' quite unlike that of limited human knowledge. This unconscious tendency in Knight is met, however, by his description of the Temptations as a probationary period without which the 'knowledge' of Jesus about His mission could not have been formed. Probably the author intends to point out this much, that after the Baptism Jesus looked forward with the same perspective as the prophets to a future rule of God, the Kingdom, and in some measure realized that He was to play a unique role in its establishment. The nature of this unique role was yet to be worked out in the probationary period described as the Temptations. However, the difficulty which is partially overcome by his description of the Temptations as a probationery period returns in a more vivid form when Knight ascribes to Jesus all during the Temptations the 'consciousness' of being God, and at the same time putting Himself under human law as man.[1] His summary of the First Temptation is this: "And, taken most broadly, here we behold Our Lord determining that respect for the integrity of Him human nature and submission to it is obligatory on Him, and that in the Ministry He is to serve under all human laws of life."[2] While it is true that in his interpretation of the First Temptation Knight frequently points out the Old Testament nature of this Temptation in which Jesus, true to His prophetic heritage, is constantly confessing a responsive obedience to His Father's will, this argument is contradicted when Knight describes Jesus as <u>deciding</u> to be responsive to His Father's will in order thereby to safeguard the integrity of His humanity. This reads almost as if

---

1 <u>Ibid.</u>, page 93.
2 <u>Ibid.</u>, page 95.

Jesus Himself were engaged in the struggle with the docetic tendency and consciously maintained the balance between humanity and divinity in His person.

In the interpretation of the Second Temptation by Knight the unconscious tendency toward a docetic expression of the knowledge and self-consciousness of Jesus is somewhat curtailed when he describes the Temptations as 'events' which "forced" upon Jesus the full realization of the outcome of His life if He were to follow the way of obedience and service. Thus he describes the Second Temptation as a creative event by which Jesus could see just what the Suffering Servant had to be. Knight's explanation of the Third Temptation is that it showed a resolution on the part of Jesus to carry out His mission in reliance upon faith and not by an appeal to a superstitious crowd which He could coerce into 'believing' through some spectacular act. Here again, the emphasis is upon a decision on the part of Jesus how to make use of His powers as Son of God. This picture of Jesus as One deciding Himself how to use a supernatural power inherent in His being tends away from the New Testament picture of Jesus as One waiting upon strength and power from His Father.

The thought of R.J. Drummond reflects a tendency similar to that present in Knight's work. He treats the Wilderness Temptations story as an autobiographical sketch and a means by which to discover the thought of Jesus concerning Himself. He argues that Jesus thought of Himself as the Son of God, and against all the promptings of the tempter determined to live and work within "the restrictions of the human life,

which He, the Son of God, had assumed".[1] Again, the idea of Jesus making choices between alternatives according to which preserves His human nature fails to strike a note of reality and makes of Jesus neither man, nor God, but a third something, whose life as recorded in the Gospels is the result of analytical psychology practised upon himself by himself.

These examples and those other writers who follow this vein of thought carry out the interpretation of the Temptation story as one in which mission is the key to their understanding. It is in their description of how Jesus began to make decisions and to carry out this mission that they fail to account for the truly limited human knowledge of Jesus and picture Him as acting more from the motive of accommodation to humanity than devotion to the will of the Father.

b. The interpretation of the Temptations in terms of Messianic Mission.

To describe the Temptations in terms of Messianic Mission rather than in terms of self-consciousness is to move towards a description of the person of Jesus as 'responsive' rather than 'knowing', but even those interpretations using the Messianic terminology have difficulty in adequately describing the nature of the decisions of Jesus made 'during' the Temptations so as not to portray an omniscient, omnipotent being who accommodates Himself to the limitations of humanity.

In 1912, while the Jesus-of-History/Christ-of-Faith controversy was yet very much alive, James Moffatt's book, The Theology of the

---

[1] R.J. Drummond, The Relation of the Apostolic Teaching to the Teaching of Christ, 1900, page 241.

Gospels, appeared on the scene. This work was a part of a movement away from the attempt to find in the Gospels an all-inclusive and often sentimental portrait of the historical person of Jesus and was a movement towards a concentration upon some of the particulars which caused Him to appear to be unique, namely, the Messiahship and Divine Sonship. In his book, Moffatt deals with the Temptations in a section on the providence of the Father, which itself is significant in that it orients the Temptations Father-wards and not inwards into the person of Jesus. Even so, Moffatt does not succeed in entirely avoiding the difficulties of the 'self-consciousness' terminology.

According to Moffatt the Temptations were for Jesus real promptings to abuse the feeling of independence which arose from His consciousness of Divine Sonship "by claiming exemption from the ordinary duty or relying upon God's goodness in the sphere of natural wants" and "to abuse the feeling of dependence by an arbitrary test of God's willingness to intervene miraculously on behalf of those who are in peril".[1]

A fuller development of the argument from Messianic consciousness is seen in the work of the three authors, Major, Manson, and Wright, The Mission and Message of Jesus. H.D.A. Major begins the statement of their position by giving as the source of the Temptations of Jesus His newly awakened Messianic Consciousness which immediately brought before Him the question of how to fulfill His calling. According to Major, it is only in the light of His calling and Messianic Consciousness that His Temptations, and indeed His entire

---

[1] James Moffatt, The Theology of the Gospels, 1912, page 88.

ministry, can be understood.[1] This interpretation and that of T.W. Manson in the same book where he interprets the First Temptation as presented to Jesus in the form of the current belief that the Messianic Age would consist of the abundance of things and was met by Jesus with the affirmation that not even the Messiah can unsurp God's place but must be God's servant, to obey and not command, is no doubt a position pointing toward an interpretation of the Temptations in which response and obedience are the proper categories for the description of the person of Jesus, and yet even it pictures Jesus at the Baptism with a, perhaps, too well defined concept of His Messiahship.[2]

A solution to some of these difficulties lies in that description of the Temptations which treats the narrative as unfolding not the nature of the self-consciousness of Jesus, but the nature of His response and obedience as His mission was carried out under constant dependence upon the Father. Hoskyns and Davey are engaged in an approach along this line in The Riddle of the New Testament. There they argue that through the flesh of Jesus which embodied what had been expressed in Old Testament literature and prophecy came a record of a "spiritual righteousness of heart" which passed outward in that concrete speech and action which finally lead to Calvary. "In this particular history, in this scene of flesh and blood, the creative obedience to the will of God was wrought out." This obedience by Jesus was the

---

1 H.D.A. Major in Major, Manson, Wright, The Mission and Message of Jesus, 1937, page 29, where he writes: "The Messianic Consciousness was His secret possession, the inspiration of His Mission, but, as we shall see, it was only very gradually unveiled by Him".

2 Ibid., pages 335-356.

result of a "creative and penetrating insight into the meaning of the Old Testament Scriptures...But the obedience of Jesus was also a conscious conflict".

In their explanation of what they mean by "wrought out" and "penetrating insight" they point to the very wide difference between an argument which would describe the Temptation stories either in terms of supreme act of human will or as the accommodating 'decision' of one possessed of a desire to maintain the balance between His humanity and divinity and one which would describe them in terms of obedience and response to the Father. They write: "Thus far it might be argued that the evidence points to a strange human act of will by which Jesus determined to obey the will of God as He had extracted the knowledge of it from a persistent study of the Old Testament Scriptures, and by which He also determined to conceive of His life as a personal conflict with the Prince of Evil. It might also be argued that He supposed that the carrying out of His determination to the point of a voluntary death would be frought with immense consequences for men and women; that He would, in fact, by an act of utter obedience, bring in the New Order, or, as it were, wrench it from the hands of God Himself. This would make the New Testament in the end anthropocentric, for it would revolve round a human act. But this is not the truth.... His obedience was surrender to the unique and active operation of the Living God. This was expressed by Him by the relation of the Father to the Beloved or Only-Begotten Son. The final paradox can now be stated. The Action of the Living God, which took place in a single human life, carried with it no spectacular display of supernatural power.

For in the end, and here the New Testament authors speak with united voice, the Action of God took place in complete humiliation and in what appeared to be remarkable weakness. The supreme Act of God occurred not in one who possessed plenary power or lived in the light of an open vision of His glory; it occurred in human faith and temptation and in a single, isolated Figure."[1]

This interpretation of the Temptations is perhaps the furthest from any form of docetic tendency and is a position of considerable strength in the struggle with the docetic tendency. It accepts the Biblical revelation in Jesus as the revelation of God the Father and emphasises the concern by Jesus that the Father should be glorified. Hoskyns and Davey reflect this desire to glorify the Father in their presentation of the Person of Jesus as the Obedient One. This is not in the least a passive obedience of one 'possessed' by God as the instrument is possessed by the musician, which would be one form of docetic tendency, nor is it a self-abnegation on the part of Jesus. It is the creative obedience in which the self of Jesus is completely realized within the limitations of humanity. The paradox begins to be plain and it is just this, that the glory of God could be revealed within limited and dependent humanity. In the Person of Jesus this dependence is neither limitation by natural law nor dependence upon a substantial, inherent quality such as sinlessness which would always 'protect' the divinity from seeing corruption, but a dependence which is built on personal relationship with the Father.

---

[1] E.C. Hoskyns, N. Davey, The Riddle of the New Testament, 1931, pages 252-256.

This terminology of obedience and dependence in a relational interpretation of the Person of Christ is a help to the understanding of how the Sinless One could be tempted and also introduces the Christological implications of the temptations of Jesus as they occurred, not only as reported in the Wilderness Story, but throughout His entire life, a life of One tempted in all things as we are and yet without sinning.

II. The Christological implications of the Temptations and Sinlessness of Jesus: Some probelms and suggestions towards their solution.

How could the Sinless One be tempted?

This is the customary statement of the problem which involves the tension between sinlessness and temptation in the description of the Person of Christ. This tension is likely to provoke either some form of Adoptionism or some form of Docetism in the endeavour to solve it and the positive effort in the struggle against the docetic tendency must be to find that line of truth that resolves these so-called tensions and maintains the significance of both the divinity and the humanity of Christ.

Without doubt some of this tension in Christology caused by the juxtaposition of sinlessness and temptation is due to the understanding or, perhaps, misunderstanding, of what the word temptation means. Not a few have attempted to reduce this tension by giving temptation a definition which places it outside the discussion of the sinlessness of Jesus, but this solution to the tension is not always

satisfactory and may in effect be more of a by-passing of the tension than an aid to understanding it. Nevertheless, there may be a definition of temptation which adequately accounts for and helps to solve this tension between temptation and sinlessness.

H.R. Mackintosh explains that the tension present in questions such as 'How are the temptations of a sinless being real?' is unnecessarily stressed because of the failure to recognize the distinction between tempted and sinless. He defines temptation as that struggle present when a "lower aim" is felt to be in conflict with a "higher aim", but this struggle or conflict is not sin. Sin is present only when "the decision for the higher fails, or comes too slowly".[1] He writes that the integrally human nature of Jesus formed a medium for soliciation by both the higher and lower aims and "He was vulnerable in all His normal instincts, emotions, desires". According to Mackintosh, Jesus learned obedience in this struggle between higher and lower aims. Just how this conflict between higher and lower occurred in a sinless mind is, however, inscrutable: "... the only psychological analogies we can use have their origin in our own sinful experience". It would appear that this solution to the tension in the life of Jesus merely pushes the problem back into the inaccessible interior of His mind and does not answer how that mind embraced the struggle.

Perhaps the how of temptation occurring in a sinless mind, even when temptation is considered as simply the struggle between higher and lower aims which in itself is not sin, is inscrutable.

---

[1] H.R. Mackintosh, The Person of Jesus Christ, 1912, pages 401-403.

Nevertheless, some solution to this so-called tension between temptation and sinlessness may lie in an analysis of the nature of these temptations or appeals by the higher and lower aims. G.S. Duncan paraphrases St. Luke 22:28: "in all the assaults that Satan has made upon Me with a view to the overthrow of God's cause and kingdom..."[1] Similarly, W. Manson describes the temptations of Jesus as a real struggle with the Power of Darkness in which Jesus takes the role of Hero-Priest as the Pioneer, Leader, Protagonist, "who, going in front or at the head of His redeemed host, beats down the forces opposed to them, and so becomes the Founder or Inaugurator of their 'salvation'".[2]

In this interpretation of temptation, the struggle is not one which takes place in the realm of intellect, to raise problems of how the sinless mind can be tempted by conceiving of evil possibilities, but takes place in the realm of will and mission where it is relative to the Redemptive Activity of God. W. Manson believes that it is in this way that the early Church thought of Jesus, and so could describe Him as locked in mortal conflict with evil: "In the light of this conjunct evidence of St. Paul, the Synoptic Gospels, and the Johannine literature we seem justified in assuming that a type of Hero-Christology, in which Jesus, like a Christian Herakles, is locked in mortal conflict with the powers of darkness and overthrows them by His Cross and Resurrection or, alternately, is sent by God 'in the likeness of sinful flesh' and condemns sin in the flesh to death (Romans viii:3), belonged

---

1 G.S. Duncan, Jesus, Son of Man, 1947, page 230.
2 Wm. Manson, The Epistle to the Hebrews, 1951, page 103.

to the primordial substance of the world-mission theology of the Church".[1]

This interpretation of temptation as the conflict of Jesus with evil within the framework of His Redemptive Mission may be a more satisfactory explanation of the struggle than that which describes it in terms of higher and lower choices appealing to a sinless intellect, but yet again, even this may simply be the substitution of will for intellect in which occurs a similar tension -- how could a sinless will be subject to a trying appeal made from an evil source? However, this solution through conflict in the working out of the mission of Jesus in relation to God's redemptive activity does help to prevent the problem from becoming one isolated within the mind, or will, of Jesus and orients it within the total response of Jesus to his Father.

This seems to be the direction indicated by the original meaning of temptation which has so been corrupted to convey the idea of enticement to sin. Temptation and sin committed are commonly considered as parts of a larger pattern which expresses man's sinful nature. This is not necessarily the meaning of the word as it appears in either the Old or New Testaments.

In the Old Testament the words מסה and נסה carry the idea of a testing, trying, or proving in an experience which is itself a test or trial. These words do not necessarily convey the thought of a spiritual testing, but that meaning

---

[1] Ibid., pages 103-104. See: I Cor 2:6-8; Col 2:15; Jn 12:31, 14:30, Lk 10:18, 22:31.

may apply to such a situation as, for example, man being tested by God. This thought of testing or proving followed in the Septuagint translation and is common in the New Testament where it is applied to a large variety of situations having to do with man's relationship to both man and God. In this New Testament usage the idea of testing and proving is that of a trial or test intended not so much to produce either a positive or negative result, success or failure, but is a proving that has for its intended end success in the sense of producing worthiness, consecration, and usefulness for a purpose of God. God never entices to sin, and when He proves or tests, He offers His grace sufficient for the proving or testing.[1]

---

[1] Temptation in the Old and New Testament:

נסה and מסה are used in the Old Testament according to the following illustrations: (Hebrew and LXX), (Revised Standard Version)

a. God tries man:

Gen 22:1 After these things God tested Abraham....

נסה; ἐπείρασεν

Ex 20:20 And Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to prove you, and that the fear of him may be before your eyes, that you may not sin". נסות; πειράζει

Dt 4:34 Or has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, and by war.....

במסת; πειρασμῷ

Dt 8:2 And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart.....

לנסתך; ἐκπειράσῃ

b. Man tries God:

Ex 17:7 And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah ....because they put the Lord to the proof.....

נסתם; πειράζειν

Nu 14:22 none of the men who have seen my glory.... and yet have put me to the proof these ten times....

וינסו; ἐπείρασάν

Dt 6:16 You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.....

לא תנסו; ἐκπειράσεις

Ps 78:18 They tested God in their heart by demanding the food they craved. וינסו אל; ἐξεπείρασαν

c. Man tries man:

IK 10:1 Now when the queen of Sheba heard.... she came to test him with hard questions. לנסתו; πειράσει

d. Man tries object:

(Ju 6:39 .....let me make trial this once with the fleece

אנסה; πειράσω)

I Sam 17:39 And David girded his sword over his armor, and he tried in vain to go, for he was not used to them. Then David said to Saul, "I cannot go with these; for I am not used to them (AV, for I have not proved them).

לא נסיתי; πεπείραμαι

and see also:

Ex 15:25 There the Lord made for them a statute and an ordinance and there he proved them. נסהו; ἐπείρασεν

Job 9:23 When disaster brings sudden death, he mocks at the calamity of the innocent (AV He will mock at the trial of the innocent) למסת But in LXX ὅτι φαῦλοι ἐν θανάτῳ ἐξαίφνης ἀλλὰ δίκαια καταγελῶντα

Ps 26:2 Prove me, O Lord, and try me; test my heart and my mind. 3 For thy steadfast love is before my eyes, and I walk in faithfulness to thee. ונסני is used in a parallel construction with צרופה (צרף to smelt, refine, test), πείρασόν

Isa 7:12 But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test". ולא אנסה; πειράσω

In the New Testament, πείρασμος is used as in the above examples. It also occurs in situations peculiar to the New Testament.

a. Man tempts God:

Ac 5:9, 15:10; I Cor 10:9

b. God tests men:

Mt 6:13; I Cor 10:13; Heb 11:17

c. Men test men:

Rev 2:2

d. Devil-Satan-Evil test Jesus:

Mt 4:1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the Wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Mk 1:13, Lk 4:2.

e. As a proper name for 'devil':

Mt 4:3 And the tempter came .....

I Thes 3:5 ....for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you....

f. Men try Jesus

Mt 16:1 And the Pharisees and Saducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign... (Also, Mt 19:3, 22:18, 22:35)

Mk 8:11 The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven, to test him (Also, Mk 10:2, 12:18, Lk 20:27, 11:16)

g. Jesus tries men:

Jn 6:6 This he said to test him (Philip)

h. Devil-Satan-Evil test Men:

I Cor 7:5 ...lest Satan tempt you through lack of self-control.

I Thes 3:5 ...for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you.

? Rev 2:10 ...Behold the Devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested...

i. Man tests himself:

II Cor 13:5 Examine yourselves....test yourselves....

? Jas 1:13, 14 Let no one say when his is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted with evil and he himself tempts no one; 14 but each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

j. The hour of trial in the future:

I Pet 1:6 (4:12) In this you rejoice, though now for a little while you may have to suffer various trials....(4:12) Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which

comes upon you to prove you....

k. Tempted, with no source explicitly given:

Gal 6:1, Heb 2:18, 3:9 (Ps 95:9), 4:15, 11:37, ?Jas 1:2.

(End of Footnote)

When temptation occurs in a situation in which the direct relationship between man and God is involved, the temptation is never an enticement away from the truth, never an enticement to sin, but is a proving and testing the significance of which lies in the particular task to which God has called the man. For Jesus, the temptations in His life had to do with His particular redemptive mission as Son of God; they did not raise the question of His sinlessness or sinfulness as if they stemmed from His own evil desire which "When it has conceived gives birth to sin". The kerygmatic material in which the tempted life of Jesus is recorded and summarized did not have behind it the Doctrine of His Sinlessness, nor was it concerned with the problem of how to adjust the fact of temptation to this Doctrine. The New Testament can set tempted and sinless side by side without being aware of the doctrinal difficulties involved. In the history of theology, temptation has usually involved an either/or in the sense that sin either will or will not result from the enticement by evil. However, in the tempted life of Jesus, this either/or did not exist, for His temptations were His discipline by which He was continually being prepared for His redemptive mission as Son of God.

The definition of the temptations of Jesus as relative to His Mission works out in application very differently than that definition of temptation as enticement to sin which is implied in some types of systematic theology. The contrast between the two is evident in the following comparison of various explanations of how sinlessness and temptation could occur in one person.

R.L. Ottley makes use of a Kenotic Christology to explain the relationship between the temptations and the sinlessness of Jesus. In so doing it is evident throughout his work that his purpose is primarily to make as clear as possible the divinity and humanity of Jesus and to keep them separate and clearly distinct as the Two Natures in One Person. His explanation of how Jesus could be tempted and yet be sinless is given in a three point argument which begins with the perfection of Christ's human nature, is followed by the self-limitation of the Son of God, and concludes with a statement of how Christ submitted to temptation:

(a) <u>The perfection of the human nature of Christ.</u>

The body of Christ was a human body of flesh such as the Fall had left it. It was subject to the laws of growth, pain, and was liable to "sinless human infirmities..but not to defects of disease". Christ had a human soul and a human will which were "ever united to the Divine will, and subject to its control". The fact of the temptations of Jesus, however, shows that this subjection

could involve painful and prolonged struggle.

However, in this Body of flesh, the human soul, will, and spirit were present as impersonal humanity, for the human nature of Jesus "loses the privilege of a personality of its own in order to gain the special prerogative of belonging to the second Person of the Trinity". Moreover, His human nature existed as a garment in which He was clad; it subsisted in the divine nature. Ottley writes, "The Word assumed human nature, then, sinless indeed and untainted, but subject to the inheritance of weakness, suffering, and death, which had resulted from sin". However, He had complete control over His body and had power "even to overrule or counteract the proper laws of bodily existence, as when He walked upon the waves or fasted forty days and nights".[1]

(b) <u>The Self-limitation of the Son of God (or, the revealed effects of the operation of an "inalienable and perfect will")</u>.

The Kenosis of the Son of God is explained by Ottley as an act of self-determining will and self-sacrificing love which should be venerated as "the triumphant power of an unswerving will, persisting under the utmost pressure of distress and trial in a morally glorious action". The persistent quality of the will is revealed in the absolute control and possession of power over Himself which Christ enjoyed at every moment of His "real voluntary condescension".

---

[1] R.L. Ottley, <u>The Doctrine of the Incarnation</u>, 1902, quoting Newman, <u>Ath. Treat.</u>, pages 601-605.

The earthly life of the Son of God was continually a "deliberate abstention on the part of the Logos from the exercise of Divine powers that might at any moment have been resumed". Ottley illustrates this earthly life of the Son of God by the word picture of an empire's ruler conversing with little children in accommodation, reserve, and nescience.[1]

(c) Christ's submission to temptation.

"...He was perfected through moral discipline...He learned obedience and submitted to the ordinary laws of human probation...It is part of the perfection of His example that He willed to undergo the common discipline of human life, that the tempted might be upheld not only by the aid of His grace, but by the assurance of His fellow-feeling."

In this tempted life Jesus remained sinless because through the Virgin Birth the entail of sin was cut off and Jesus did not acquire its taint. He took on the likeness of sinful flesh, but "He could not will to sin". He had all the human faculties to which temptation makes its appeal, "but there was nothing within Him which responded to the appeal". Jesus battled with desire -- "though it was desire always innocent" --; He shared with the tempted the fixed attitude of resistence to evil. When He was really tempted to evade the law of holy obedience "in some sense the Deity was quiescent in His Temptation". This Deity conferred on His humanity just such strength of will as was "infallibly sufficient, but not more than sufficient to

---

[1] R.L. Ottley, The Doctrine of the Incarnation, pages 606-612.

sustain Him in conflict and bear Him through the fearful strife".

Ottley states his conclusion thus: "His human nature in the power of the Spirit was enabled to prevail over temptation...there was present in Christ's human nature a countervailing force which enabled Him to conquer the temptation by which He was beset, not coercing His human will, but acting upon it morally in the way of constraining appeal."[1]

The problem in this approach is that the temptations never do seem quite real. The temptations are attached to the humanity, but the humanity is kept constantly in check by the divinity. Ottley appears to be unconsciously engaged in a repetition of some of the historical forms of docetic tendency. For example, his use of impersonal humanity, which H.R. Mackintosh would term "outworn scholasticism", makes it very difficult for a person of this day to understand how human personality can be present in impersonal humanity, especially when that humanity is being worn as a garment for the divinity. Also, there is something of this difficulty where he treats of Kenotic Christology, which raises the whole question of whether or not it is valid to base an entire Christology upon the idea of kenosis and so interpret the Incarnation more as an act of condescension by the Son than an act of sending by the Father. Ottley uses this kenotic argument in his attempt to point out the reality of Christ's becoming poor and the Word becoming flesh, but the problem lies in the emphasis which he places upon the condescension which seems to treat the Incarnation as if Christ were constantly 'descending', as it were, constantly becoming

---

[1] R.L. Ottley, The Doctrine of the Incarnation, pages 613-617.

flesh, almost as if the Incarnation were a constant linear process the end of which is never quite achieved. In Ottley's system, there is a strong tendency to display that form of docetism which will never admit that a full and complete Incarnation took place.

The temptations of Jesus in this argument have little to do with His divinity, for they seem to be real only as there is a quiescence of the divine nature or when the "beams of deity" are restrained. Further, by his argument from the sinlessness of Jesus as the result of the Virgin Birth, Ottley makes temptation become for Jesus a 'physical' impossibility. He places temptation in a chain of cause and effect in which temptation appeals to or entices the sinful in human nature, which is the classical expression of temptation as an appeal to the lower nature of man and his less noble desires. Because of the Virgin birth, that to which an appeal by temptation might be made was not present in the humanity of Jesus. Since there was in Him nothing to which temptation could appeal, He was not really tempted. If He obeyed at all, it must have been an obedience of one inherently incapable of disobedience.

Perhaps the only way out of these difficulties in which Jesus as human is under complete and effective control of His divinity is to hold, as Ottley does, that at certain times the Deity was "quiescent", but not too quiescent, and allowed enticing temptation to slip in. This, however, is far removed from the definition of the temptations as those positive, creative, proving and testing experiences of Jesus which took place as His mission was wrought out in faith, dependence, obedience, and His life supported by grace from the Father.

W.A. Grist points out some of the difficulties of an approach to the Person of Jesus through doctrines such as sinlessness and suggests that it is in the Biblical account of the life of Jesus, the Historic Christ, that a solution more satisfactory than that offered by the Doctrinal Christ is to be found. He writes: "In dealing with the temptation of Jesus, we have to face the two perils that meet us whenever we seek for an intellectual presentation of the Incarnation — viz., Docetism on the one hand, which reduces the struggle to mere make-believe; and Naturalism, on the other, which insists upon eliminating the Divine Spirit from the phenomena of Christ's experience."[1]

Grist suggests that in the ideas of endowment and attainment may lie a solution to some of the problems raised in the more doctrinal, or Two-Natures approach to the temptations. He believes that the spirit of holiness, for example, is in Jesus both an endowment and an attainment. The descent of the Spirit at the Baptism was an anointing of the Manhood of the Son of God and was the result of thirty years of resolute obedience (attainment) and made the spiritual side of His complex nature paramount over the flesh (endowment). The Spirit, Grist believes, Jesus received into His life by moral choice and so "wrought out His destiny as the Son of God".[2] He was at all times Son of God; the choice by Jesus of fellowship with the Father is part of His growth to maturity. As a part of this process of maturation and perfection for His office He was precipitated by the descent of the

---

[1] W.A. Grist, The Historic Christ in Faith Today, 1911, page 65.
[2] Ibid., page 59.

Holy Spirit "into a struggle against all the promptings and suggestions that sprang from the Spirit of His age".[1]

In contrast to the argument brought forth by Ottley in which a Sinlessness is presumed and the description of the temptations of the Person of Jesus made to conform to it, Grist's argument accepts the Biblical description of the Person as an accurate biographical account and from it derives a sinlessness which is not an inherent quality (in the sense of non potuit peccare), but is attained through the development of what was from the beginning endowment.

Grist points a way to an interpretation of the temptations of Jesus in which they appear to be neither enticement to sin, nor merely temptations such as occur in the life of any man regardless of his sinful condition[2], but are the temptations of the Redeemer, and as such are significant as a part of Christ's work.

This position towards temptation is adopted by H.W. Robinson in Redemption and Revelation. He writes that although the temptations and sinlessness offer some key to the inner person of Jesus, it is impossible through them to see in that Person a static nature explained in metaphysical terms of attributes.[3] Robinson regards the temptations to be important not as an indication of the inner nature of the Person of Jesus, but as a part of His work, His redeeming activity. He appears

---

1 W.A. Grist, The Historic Christ in Faith Today, 1911, page 95.

2 L. Hodgson, And Was Made Man, 1933, pages 42, 43: "Temptation is an integral part of human life which no one can escape, however close may be his communion with God." He writes, "no doubt our temptations are often due to our sinfulness or to our incomplete detachment from worldly claims and cares. But to maintain that temptation is impossible apart from these is the work of an abstract logic divorced from reflection on life as we know it in experience."

3 H.W. Robinson, Redemption and Revelation, 1942, pages 197-218.

to believe that as the Godhead in the flesh Jesus is unknowable, but as Suffering Servant, Messiah, He is known and believed. To press further than this understanding of temptation as a part of the Son's work is, for Robinson, to look upwards from man's position and endeavour to describe that which man's knowledge can never encompass, neither through the analogy of personality nor the description of man as capax dei.[1]

While these approaches to the temptations which describe them in the terms of the work and mission of Christ the Messiah, Redeemer, Saviour, do overcome some of the difficulties present when the temptations are laboriously fitted into a system which presuppose a so-called tension in the idea of inherent sinlessness confronted by enticement to sin, they seem almost to go to the other extreme and say nothing at all about the relationship of sin and temptation. A full treatment of the temptations of Jesus should ask and endeavour to answer some of the questions that involve the concepts of sin and temptation in relation to the concepts of divinity and humanity in Jesus. The temptations do reveal something of the nature of sin, something of the nature of sinlessness, something of the nature of the Son, and something of the nature of the Father. The chapter will conclude with a brief review of some accounts of the sinlessness of Jesus in an endeavour to show possibilities and limitations to stating sinlessness in terms

---

[1] W. Manson, The Epistle to the Hebrews, 1951, page 110. Here a similar view is adopted. The temptations are a part of Christ's work which in revealing the soul travail of Jesus "show us what it was for Jesus to be a Son, and what it was to be a Priest, and what it was to be both of these together".

similar to the Biblical definition of temptation as a creative testing, trying, and proving. But first, two conclusions about the temptations.

First, when the temptations of Jesus are made to conform to a pattern established by the Doctrine of the Sinlessness or of His Two Natures, their reality begins to disappear. This is the docetic tendency as it relates to the temptations of Jesus.

Second, Jesus, Son of God, Messiah, as revealed through His tempted life was One to whom the Father gave Himself through the Word of the Old Testament Scriptures and through the Royal Message at the Baptism. The sum of this giving of the Father throughout the life of Jesus is the grace imparted by the Father to the Son, a grace of the Father which is reflected in "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" which was, in the same way that God's glory was revealed in the Cross, reflected in the obedience of Jesus. In this way, the temptations join in the witness, "The Father and I are One".

III. The Doctrine of the Sinlessness of Jesus: its susceptibility to the docetic tendency.

a. Two types of answer to the question 'Why was Jesus Sinless?'

From the deductions drawn from the preceding discussion of the sinlessness of Jesus it is clear that the Sinlessness as a self-contained Doctrine is approached here with considerable pessimism. It was pointed out that Sinlessness as a Doctrine of the inherent nature of Christ

is not what is meant by the New Testament witness to the fact that Jesus, having been tempted in all things, remained sinless. His temptations were first of all creative experiences; they were not negative and destructive, which they would have been if 'enticement to sin' is at the root of 'temptation'. It has also been pointed out that when the Two Natures argument is applied as a solution to some of the questions provoked by the fact of temptation and sinlessness occurring together, it is usually the humanity which suffers depreciation from an, as it were, over-protective attitude towards the divinity.

Another reason for approaching the Doctrine of the Sinlessness with some pessimism is that if the condition of the Church today is squarely faced and it is admitted that there are anti-doctrinal sentiments frequent among its laity, and this is true especially among the younger laity, two questions, very difficult to answer, are being asked and must be dealt with. The first question asked is 'How are we to believe in the sinlessness of Jesus when we can examine neither His detailed life nor all His inner motives?' The second question is 'What is the need of a Doctrine of His sinlessness, for if He is accepted as like man in every way except that He is without sin, is He not in effect accepted as entirely unlike man and therefore quite unapproachable and meaningless for sinful man?' Interpreted in the light of this study of the struggle with the docetic tendency, these questions ask: How can the Doctrine of the Sinlessness of Jesus be appropriated without accepting along with it at unreal, docetic Christ?

There are two general classes of answers to this question of how to explain and include in one's faith the Doctrine of the Sinlessness

of Jesus. In the following pages, they are each submitted to the test of the docetic tendency in an attempt to discover whether or not they lay hold of and take seriously both the divinity and humanity of Jesus.

1. Answer One: Jesus was sinless as the result of an inherent quality in his nature.

(a) The Sinlessness as an inherent quality in the Person of Jesus explained as the result of an evolutionary process.

An example of this explanation appears in The Holiness of Jesus where A.D. Martin reasons that the concept of sinlessness sheds light into the inner life of Jesus, and that although it is a term which calls for supplementation by some positive word, it is of value in that "it helps on towards such a desired word by setting free our minds to conceive of moral and religious qualities in an unhindered vitality". "When, therefore, we consider one who knew no sin, whose inner life we have reason to believe was never cut off from its source in God, we expect to see an energy at work exceeding all common human standards and attainments. And so, indeed, we find Jesus."[1] Martin writes that the entire life of Jesus exhibits the joy of a life in communion with God through the realization in faith of the Father's Sovereignty, His nurture and protection.[2] It is this faithful communion with the

1 A.D. Martin, The Holiness of Jesus, 1934, page 231.
2 Ibid., pages 164-180.

Father which, according to Martin, is the source of the holiness of Jesus, a holiness which he describes as "a supreme event" which "calls for all the faith we can muster".[1]

But, asks Martin, how can a man be born holy and sinless when mankind is linked through the evolutionary process to a beginning source of sin?[2]

In this same process by which man is linked to his sinful source Martin finds the answer to his question. He argues that evolution is not a slow, constant, unchanging process, but is broken here and there by "paroxysmal changes" or by the acceleration of process. These phenomena are not confined to the physical development of structure, but take place also in man's spiritual development and are evident in the religious history of mankind. Martin writes: "Having these glimpses of what can only be called periodical discontinuity, is it not fitting that we should be prepared to see some climax in the history of our race, some commanding event, a moment when a completely spiritual man should appear, gathering into himself, as it might seem, the various virtues and religious qualities of his ancestor, consummating poetry and prophecy and moral achievement in a form entirely holy?"[3]

---

1 A.D. Martin, The Holiness of Jesus, 1934, page 240.

2 This linking through the evolutionary process is a linking to a beginning source of sin which is the conflict of the primitive forms of life in the struggle for existence. Martin does not trace the source to Adam's fall.

3 Ibid., pages 241-242. Similarly, James Drummond, Studies in Christian Doctrine, 1908, page 315: His view "brings Jesus before us, not as an exceptional portent in the boundless realm of being, but as the highest instance of the operation of a great spiritual law. If the Divine energy is everywhere present, even in the meanest insect, if the Divine Spirit animates the soul of man, if there are ascending grades of character and of spiritual illumination, then there is no reason why the manifestion of God's holiness and love in a man should not reach in some instance a supreme splendour, and become through him

a source of spiritual light to others. So understood, the union of God with Christ becomes, to use the current phraseology, exceptional in degree, and not in kind."

The first difficulty with this position is in the explanation that the form which the humanity of Jesus took and the actions by which it expressed itself were determined by a "paroxysmal change" which took place within the evolutionary process. The docetic tendency in its later developments often appears accompanied by some form of determinism, as, for example, the humanity of Jesus being controlled by the Divinity, or Jesus the man being controlled by the Christ-Spirit. In Martin's exposition, the controlling or determining factor is the evolutionary process and the result is a humanity, or a divinity, for that matter, which is not free, for Jesus was what He was out of an inherent capability produced through "paroxysmal change" in the evolutionary process and not out of a free response to the Father.

This deterministic expression of the docetic tendency is not intended by Martin to exclude the elements of obedience and response in the life of Jesus, although it does appear to do so. He writes that the life of Jesus was the product of a "coalescence of a perfectly good mind with a fully energetic will" and was a life in which Jesus never failed to obey the Divine Will. So it appears that Martin desires to express the sinlessness of Jesus not exclusively as an inherent quality the presence of which is explained through the evolutionary process, but as a moral attribute. His arguments are not a convincing statement that sinlessness can be described both as an inherent quality and at the same time a moral attribute derived in a free, obedient,

responsive life of a real humanity supported by the grace of the Father.

(b) The Sinlessness of Jesus explained as a new factor suddenly appearing from outside the process of evolution.

According to this explanation, the Sinlessness of Jesus resulted from a break in the hereditary descent of sin which is described as the introduction of a new factor into the evolutionary process by an abnormal force working outside that process. William Sanday explains that the preparation for this new factor was begun in those pagan myths and legends of virgin birth which were "a dim unconscious preparation for that Event...a prophetic instinct". The Virgin Birth of Jesus is a witness to the appearance of the Son of Man and the fact that His sinless human nature was "something essentially outside the continuity of the species".[1]

In a similar argument A.S. Peake writes that the task to be achieved through the Incarnation "was of such vital moment, and sin had brought the coil in which humanity was ensnared into such a tangle, that for its unravelling we may well believe God would not shrink from bringing abnormal forces into play".[2]

Except for the fact that this argument explains the sinlessness of Jesus in terms of a new factor introduced from without the evolutionary process, the same difficulties are present as in the above explanation

---

[1] William Sanday, Outlines of the Life of Christ, 1905, pages 208-209.
[2] A.S. Peake, Christianity, Its Nature and Its Truth, 1908, page 176.

by Martin in which the sinlessness is accounted for as a paroxysmal change taking place within the evolutionary process.

(c) Sinlessness explained as a necessary result in terms of the pre-existent nature of Christ.

In this explanation of the sinlessness of Jesus, it is held that the pre-existent holiness of Christ necessarily implies sinlessness as an inherent quality of the Incarnate Christ. In The Incarnation and Recent Criticism, R.J. Cooke suggests that the Virgin Birth, and the consequent sinlessness of Jesus, was determined by the nature of the pre-existent Christ. Cooke writes: "If the Holy One of God, the eternal Logos, appears among men he must have an adequate organ for his manifestion...He must have a nature which shall be clean and holy, a nature untainted by hereditary evil -- a pure nature for the pure person." He argues that for its incarnation, the immaculate spirit demands an immaculate organism.[1]

This position shares with the two above a deterministic nature. Each of these points of view assumes some inherent necessity for Jesus to enter the world sinless. To meet that necessity His entry into the world is made the product of some divine fiat worked either inside or outside the evolutionary process.

There is another aspect of these arguments which is highly paradoxical in the light of their tendencies toward a docetic determinism. When a statement of the nature of the Person of Christ appears to be

---

[1] R.J. Cooke, The Incarnation and Recent Criticism, 1907, pages 146-147.

docetically inclined, it is usually the result of too great an emphasis upon His overshadowing divinity which determines and controls his humanity. The nature of the humanity as it exists in other men is held not to have any influence upon the nature of the humanity of Christ. Contrary to this usual tendency, the arguments above appear to derive much of their explanation of the sinlessness of Jesus from the fact of the sinful nature of <u>other men</u>. Implicit in their statements is the proposition that since man cannot save himself and is sinful, Jesus, who does save man, could not be sinful and must, therefore, be sinless. Thus the sinlessness of Jesus is described as doubly determined — it is determined not only by some explanation of an evolutionary process, but is determined by the fact of man's sinfulness. Neither of these reasons for the sinlessness of Jesus is deduced from the nature of the life He lived upon earth as the New Testament records and comments upon it, but each is deduced from some factor which from outside the life of Christ determined the form which that human life would take.

2. <u>Answer Two: The Sinlessness of Jesus was a part of His Atoning Work.</u>

In this section the sinlessness of Jesus is described not in relation to His human-divine inner nature, but in relation to the Atoning Work which He accomplished as sent by the Father into a sinful world to take upon Himself the sinful nature of man, to be made sin.

R.C. Moberly accounts for the sinlessness of Jesus in terms of

the Atonement in which sinlessness is described as "the property, the power, of inherent righteousness, self-identified for consummation of penitence, with sinful man".[1] He explains that as Jesus identified Himself with sinful man, the Atonement was wrought and that the sinlessness of Jesus was in reality the deepest possible experience of sin for Him — an experience of sin by which Atonement was made possible. This Atonement in Moberly's explanation of perfect repentence and penitence by Jesus which was made possible by His complete identification with sinful man. Absolute penitence, Moberly argues, is made possible in human life only by one who has not sinned but feels repentent for the sinner, for example, the father for the reprobate son or friend for friend. This identifying penitence will be more real and reach deeper into the heart of the sinless than of the sinner who, "confused with sin, which dims and paralyzes every personal power, cannot see or feel sin as it is".[2] This penitence through identification is then the result of a complete, unselfish self-giving which can enter into another's sin, can enter into that other who cannot feel his own sin. It is this identification which makes possible the very real experience of sin without sinning, which makes it more of an experience of sin than that which the sinner himself has experienced. This argument pressed further seems to say that, in the end, only Jesus knows what sin is; man has but a hazy idea for he is confused by sin. This may also imply that in reality, Jesus was the only self-conscious sinner, for He is the

---

[1] R.C. Moberly, Atonement and Personality, 1907, page 132.

[2] Ibid., page 127.

only one who could or did feel the sting of sin without the dulling effect of sins.

This paradoxical sinless sinfulness is recognized in Jesus not by analogy to man's own sinfulness, but is there as a part of that veil by which the Incarnation shields man from the face to face encounter with God as He is. At the same time, the sinless sinfulness is a revelation of God as He is, for it is only through the consequence of the Son of God having been made sin, with the Cross as witness to that consequence, that the seriousness of sin becomes evident, and unless sin is taken as a real factor, though hidden in all of its reality by the sins of the sinners, the revelation of God is lessened and the fullness of the love and sacrifice of Jesus is not perceived.[1]

D.W. Forrest's argument in The Authority of Christ affords another example of the idea that the sinlessness of Christ is to be explained only as an integral part of His humanity taken upon Himself in His Atoning Incarnation. Forrest expresses the sinlessness of Jesus not as if it were a quality inherent in the nature of Jesus but as if it were a term which can in part describe the relationship of Jesus to the Father: "The problem of reconciliation...of which His Gospel was the solution, did not exist for Him personally....His joy is not that of the son who has wandered and been restored, but of the son who has never left the Father's house. This is the mystery of Christ's sinlessness." Forrest concludes that the meaning of the sinlessness of Jesus is this: "...He did not at any point of His progressive experience deflect from the specific ideal of service set before Him

---

[1] James Moffatt, The Theology of the Gospels, 1912, pages 109 ff.

by God." His was a goodness realized and manifested "under definite restrictions and conditions, not the goodness that is infinite and absolute". Since His was a perfection derived from "a vocation determined by the Father, so it was only by the continuous reception of the Father's grace that He was able to fulfil it. And the grace was given Him, as it is given to us, according to His need; but in His case alone it was never bestowed in vain, because in Him the spirit of surrender and response never failed."[1]

In these two explanations of the sinlessness by Moberly and Forrest, sinlessness is never described as if it were a substantial, inherent quality of the nature of the Incarnate Christ. Rather, sinlessness is a term used to sum up all that response of Jesus to the Father made while He was living out an Atoning Vocation determined by the Father and constantly supported by grace from the Father. It was in responding to the grace of the Father that Jesus was sinless, and this was a free response which, just because it was free, could not be sinful.

Just as in the preceding chapter the explanation of miracle which was adopted as that furthest from a docetic tendency and as an aid in the constant struggle with the docetic tendency solved problems only to open up an entire Christology, so this solution to the temptations and sinlessness through the category of grace opens up the entire problem of how the response to grace was made. A solution to this question is indicated in the following chapter on the limited

---

[1] D.W. Forrest, The Authority of Christ, 1906, pages 10-12, 16-22.

knowledge of Jesus.

b. Suggestions for a restatement of the Doctrine of the Sinlessness of Jesus which employ the element of paradox as a safeguard against the docetic tendency.

Most of the previous sections of this chapter have been in a negative vein of criticism of the current forms of stating the sinlessness of Jesus and the relationship between this sinlessness and the temptations. This negative criticism is based upon the conclusion that many of the definitions of His sinlessness are definitions of a substantial nature and are thus contrary to the active relationship of call and response which is at the heart of the New Testament revelation of God's dealing with mankind.

This substantial definition of the sinlessness of Jesus describes it as an inherent attribute, a substance of His nature which differentiates Him from other men and makes Him to be the capable organ of salvation. The idea of sinlessness as substance destroys the free quality of the Son's response to the Father, for there is nothing responsive in substance. Substance is; it is neither becoming nor active in any other way. It is impossible to read the fifth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John without coming to the conclusion that at all times in the life of Jesus there was an active, dependent response made by Jesus to the Father.

Perhaps the strongest support for this substantial explanation of the Person of Jesus comes from the Virgin Birth when it is interpreted

as an event which conveyed to Jesus a substance of certain quality unlike other men. Probably little is achieved through either the outright denial of the Virgin Birth or the often polemic apologies for it. What it seems to stand for is an act of God. If this event is considered as an act of God, then there is no reason for reading into it what it does not express, namely, that the act resulted in what is certainly non-act in equipping Jesus with a substance which would prohibit by its very nature His knowing what sin is, that is, would prohibit Him from realizing the power of sin, which He did realize to such an extent that He knew from the beginning of His ministry that some form of cross awaited Him and yet set His face steadfastly towards it.

The problem of the sinlessness is how to state it without relying upon the traditional substantial concepts which inject a note of unreality into the human life of Jesus and so open the way to a docetic tendency. The problem is not made easier by passages such as St. John 1:14, Romans 8:3, II Corinthians 5:21. These passages warn that notwithstanding the very tender affection in which Jesus is held by the devout believer in Him, and in spite of the fact that we worship the Father only through Him and know that salvation is possible only because of Him, His coming in the flesh, in the very likeness of sinful flesh, must be taken seriously. For Paul this likeness was taken seriously and in the face of all that the Apostle was capable of saying concerning the nature of the 'flesh' in man. Paul does not state this likeness of Jesus to sinful man as if it were merely an abstract resemblance, as if God had to accommodate Himself to man's state in order for man to understand what God was doing and saying, but rather, he is

stating a concrete image or likeness.

Thus, no matter how pious the motives, there should be no reluctance to admit the full meaning and implication of the message of St. John and St. Paul.

Christ came suffering all the infirmitives common to man as he lived then and as he lives now. In this weakness the Glory and the Salvation of God were made manifest. This was possible by the constant reliance of Jesus on the grace from the Father and by the constant gracious support of Jesus by the Father. This responsive relationship made possible the sinlessness of Jesus, not as an inherent quality of sinlessness, but as a creation by the Father.

Now appears the very great difficulty with this explanation of the sinlessness of Jesus. On one hand it has been seen how a substantial definition of His sinlessness in terms of inherent nature is open to some of the dangers of the docetic tendency, and now it appears that this present statement of the sinlessness in terms of grace may tend towards some form of Adoptionism. However, between the docetic description of Christ in which He appears to be a tertium quid unlike all men who preceded Him and yet unlike God, and the Adoptionist description of Him as a man raised to Glory by God, through grace, there may lie a statement of the sinlessness of Jesus which follows the fine line of response. It was the Father speaking, supporting, guiding; it was the Son answering, obeying, following. Only the Son could act in response to the Father who had sent Him to do what the law was to weak to do, and man too sinbound to do, and what only God Himself could do.

During His life on earth, the Son was constantly encountering trials

and tests which were for Him creative events in which the Father was calling forth from Him that response which only the Son could make and which the Son could make only as the Father called it forth. The Temptation Stories as a summary of the Life do not reveal that in the face of enticement to sin Jesus stood firm and did not fall; they reveal who Jesus was. As Son of God He was called upon to make a unique response to the Father and was uniquely supported in making this response. Jesus was not sinless in the sense that He possessed an inherent faculty of avoiding the sinful act; He was sinless in that He was responsive. This is the paradox, that the sinlessness of Jesus was due solely to what He was, the Son of God, and at the same time was due solely to the supporting grace from God the Father. On one hand is the response -- unique, possible only because of what Jesus was; on the other hand is the call which came from the Father and was accompanied by power from Him. Without the response, nothing; without the call, nothing. And yet, the response was impossible without the Father calling it forth, and the call was meaningless without the response. Of the temptations and sinlessness, indeed, of the Incarnation itself, it was all of God the Father, and it was all of God the Son.

The power of Jesus is revealed through 'weakness' in that in Him the power of God was made manifest in a redeeming way through the gracious relationship between Father and Son. Just as the power of Jesus is not revealed in the supernatural act, neither is it revealed through some quality which separates Him from other men, but rather in that quality of response which all men through faith can share with Him. However, His response was that of the Only Begotten Son sent

by the Father; the response of the faithful is but the response of adopted sons who do respond only because Christ's response embraced all future response. To these adopted sons, the Father gives grace sufficient for the response He calls forth from them just as He gave to the Only Begotten such grace that through the weakness of the likeness of sinful flesh the Glory of the Godhead might be made manifest. Through the limited life of Jesus crowned by His Cross and Resurrection, His Godhead was revealed.

Chapter IV.

THE LIMITED KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS AND THE DOCETIC TENDENCY

Introduction

In the two preceding chapters recent interpretations of the manifestations of the power of Jesus have been investigated. The positive conclusion reached was that the power manifested through the miracles of Jesus was a power not of a self-sufficient Jesus of Nazareth, but a power of the Father working through the faithful Son and displaying itself in those occasions when to use Martin Buber's terminology, especially as it is interpreted by Allan Galloway, the 'It' was miraculously transformed into a 'Thou' and material existence was given meaning by the creative operation of the law that the spiritual and material are not separated by a fixed gulf. The subject of the power which Jesus displayed in His 'resistance' to temptation in His sinless life was explored and two positive conclusions were reached: one, that in being tempted, Jesus was subject not to an enticement to sin, but to that gracious creative experience by which He was tried, tested, and disciplined for His own good in the Way of Redemption to the end that He might in His humanity both reveal and share in the Glory and Holiness of the Father; two, that in being sinless, Jesus displayed a power born not of substance, in the sense that He was by His inherent nature sinless, but a power born of a unique, constant, and sustaining relationship to the Father, a relationship of grace.

These statements of the power of Jesus in no way exclude the idea of His living a limited human life; the manner in which the manifestations of His power are explained actually invite the concept of limitation.

The study of the limitations of Jesus has been directed largely by the form of the early controversies of the Church in which the divinity and the humanity became the two divisions into which were fitted the various aspects of Christ's life. It was at an early date relatively simple to admit of physical limitations in the humanity of Jesus which had to do with time and space, but from the very beginning of Christian thought the more the limitations seemed to impinge upon the divinity of the Incarnate Christ or to touch upon the scheme of salvation, the more reluctantly were they applied. Thus one of the early subjects of philosophical reflection which stimulated a great deal of controversy and debate was that of the Impassibility of God and its ramifications extending to the suffering of Jesus who was the Word come in the flesh. ""If He suffered," said the Ebionites, "He was not divine." "If He was divine," said the Docetists, "His sufferings were unreal." "[1] It was far easier to hold firmly to the suffering humanity of Jesus than it was to adhere to the concept of Christ suffering in His divinity. Today, however, theological works provide only an occasional and fragmentary reference to this once important subject of Divine Impassibility;

---

1 L. Hodgson, "The Knowledge of Christ Incarnate", A New Commentary, Chas. Gore, Ed. 1928, Part III, page 299. See also, Chas. Gore, Dissertations, 1896, page 102: "At any rate to guard the conception of the divine impassibility, philosophical Christians...go dangerously far in minimizing the meaning of the Incarnation. It is overmuch assimilated to the immanence of the divine reason in the universe."

2 The exception to this is J.K. Mozley's extensive treatment in The Impassibility of God, 1926.

That the subject of Christ's susceptibility to pain and suffering as such so infrequently occurs today reflects the attitude of the present age which admits without equivocation the thesis that Jesus was limited and was neither wholly Godhead nor revealed wholly the Godhead. Along with this admission must follow the acceptance of limitations which are expressed in pain and suffering in the entire person, human and divine. Thus the discussion of physical pain and suffering as a Christological problem has receded into history. In its place a discussion of the limitations of the knowledge of Jesus has appeared to replace the traditional debates on the subject of the Divine Impassibility. Leonard Hodgson traces the beginning of this new development as far back as the initiation of the "psychological period of philosophy" by Descartes.[1]

The liberal criticism of the Nineteenth Century contribution to the study of Christianity according to strictly historical methods produced a picture of a thoroughly human Jesus. In its more extreme forms liberal historical criticism appeared at times to have shorn the New Testament setting in which Jesus appears of all trimmings which would portray Him as other than a very good, devout, highly intelligent man who, endowed with keen spiritual insight, embarked upon a mission to His people on behalf of God. The positive results and contributions of this liberal historical criticism were widely accepted, but along with the qualified assent there set in a reaction which sought to take seriously the eschatological and apocalyptic character of the message of

---

[1] L. Hodgson, "The Knowledge of Christ Incarnate", A New Commentary, Part III, page 299.

Jesus. In its turn, this reaction could go so far as to overshadow the humanity of Jesus by its interpretation of these eschatological and apocalyptic elements, but it was on the whole the healthy product of discontent with such explanations of these elements that would describe Jesus solely as the product of His Jewish environment. There was discontent, to express the reaction most conservatively, with the portrait of Jesus as a mistaken and finally disillusioned zealot for God's cause, as a religious genius, or as a possessed fanatic, or as the mistaken Christ. In this reaction it was seriously questioned what Jesus meant by referring to Himself as Son of Man, and an answer was sought that went beyond mere Jewish history and tradition. Questions were asked concerning the consciousness Jesus had of His pre-existence, about His consciousness of identification with One who should later come in judgment. Finally the question became: what did Jesus intend by His use of the apocalyptic and eschatological?

Now if the theological mind which was reacting against the extremes of historical criticism yet retained its candid affirmation of the concept of limitation as applicable to the Person of Christ, the question was bound to be raised as to what bearing the very real and limited humanity of Jesus had upon this question of His consciousness, and indeed, upon the whole theology of the Incarnation. Was His consciousness limited; was the idea of limitation so readily accepted in the field of His physical life to be applied to His life in the mind also?

The physical limitations of Jesus, the Divine Suffering, had once presented a difficulty. Now the problem for reflection is that

of Divine Ignorance.[1] In the field of His thought, knowledge, consciousness, what part in the Christological interpretation of His life does the docetic tendency play? This is the question for this chapter.

I. The legitimacy of the study of the knowledge of Jesus.

The immediate problem for this study is whether or not the consciousness of Jesus was limited according to the nature of man or unlimited according to the nature of God. If the Incarnation is true, if it is truly the Son sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, then the consciousness of the Incarnate One must share in the limitations of the mind of man who knows so relatively little about the universe around him, whose mind is a mind of the 'flesh'. The task of examining in the light of the docetic tendency what is written about this consciousness or knowledge of Jesus could be undertaken by applying either of two questions: One, does the writer in Christology give to the Incarnate Christ a knowledge common to humanity or does he ascribe to Him a knowledge far exceeding that of man? Two, does the writer show forth the Incarnate Christ as receiving His knowledge as man receives knowledge or does Christ 'learn' in a manner not at all human?

Question One must be abandoned as a basis of inquiry for the reason that it would involve first a listing of the bits and pieces of knowledge ascribed to Jesus by the theologian and then a checking of them against the knowledge which is assumed to lie within reach of man's

1 L. Hodgson, And Was Made Man, 1933, page ix.

mind in order to determine whether or not the knowledge or consciousness of Jesus was that of a limited human mind or that of an all-knowing docetic Christ. Such an examination would be based upon the mistaken assumption that a distinction can be made between these two kinds of knowledge, the human and the divine, and that in man rests the gift of recognizing the precise line of demarcation at which knowledge passes in quality from human to divine.

The second question is based upon the assumption that a distinction is discernible between a human method of acquiring knowledge and that method which exceeds the limitations of mankind and elevates the 'learning' process to something akin to an involuntary infusion from above which disregards the context in which the man and his mind are placed, as does, for example, the theory of verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture.

This second question as a method of investigation is the one here pursued, and it is applied as a basis of study of the recent British Christology in this form: How did the knowledge displayed by Jesus come to Him?

Before passing on to explore certain of the great variety of answers to the question of how Jesus did know and what was the basis of this knowledge there is necessary some apology. It is a fair question to ask just what right or capability the theologian, or anyone else, has to delve into the subject of the knowledge and consciousness of Jesus, or how it is possible for sinful man to know anything at all about this consciousness.

a. The skeptical-reverent attitude towards the study of the knowledge of Jesus: 'Messianic purpose' as a key to the nature of His knowledge.

Most persons who have written on the subject of the consciousness of Jesus, whether in the field of His self-consciousness, or His knowledge and ignorance, of His consciousness of Sonship, or any other of the multitude of consciousnesses produced by the interest in this area, admit the validity of this question and make some sort of statement about the necessity of reverence in the study. Most authors who write on the subject do so out of the conviction that the New Testament makes known a real Person and has recorded some of His words and some of His acts, and that from these it is in a measure possible to discover what Jesus knew and to suggest how He came to know it, and all this notwithstanding the fact that the mind of the investigator is the mind of a sinner.

Other authors treat the study with outright skepticism. L.W. Grensted, for example, would caution that the psychological approach to Christology as if it were a consciousness study, while theoretically possible, is precarious in the extreme because "the material contained in the Gospels is entirely secondhand in character, so far as the direct presentation of the experience of Jesus is concerned...both events and teaching are given to us through the experience of the early Church...". It would be unfortunate if this warning were only one more instance of the Jesus-of-History/Christ-of-Faith controversy, but Grensted should not be forced to mean that just because the New Testament is the product of the Church's faith which was stimulated by the Resurrection, its contents do

not reveal a real person in Jesus. He writes himself that the person of Christ was by the early Church accepted and interpreted as a living unity dwelling under all the limits of historical environment and he does not suggest the position that owing to the modern environment we cannot understand the mental activity of someone who lived at the beginning of our era. He is, however, entirely skeptical of the possibility of getting behind the experience of the disciples to the experience of Jesus, and he writes that it may be "not only most reverent but also most scientific" to leave the questions of the consciousness of Jesus unanswered. He argues that we understand the New Testament by understanding those who wrote and to whom they wrote, and while in this understanding we are in touch with the living Jesus of History, we may not go further back into the life of Jesus than this; to attempt to do so would be to move "not to fact but to theory, since it can only be accomplished by abstraction and inference from the direct facts which we know".

These statements would seem surely to close the door also to any study of the knowledge of Jesus. However -- and perhaps Grensted would not agree -- his arguments appear to have left one point of entry into the study of the knowledge of Jesus. He suggests that in their contact with Jesus during His life and after the Resurrection, these New Testament writers had come to know of fellowship, life, sin and freedom, the true worth of man and the nature of God. This teaching lead them to question who and what was this Jesus: "As we read the Gospels we can readily trace the emphasis which shows how the answer came to be given." This <u>emphasis</u> was the stressing of the Messianic

Claim of Jesus. Although Grensted writes that before the Gospels were written there had appeared a collection of testimonies citing Jewish Scriptures to show that Jesus was "not only the Messian who should suffer, but was the Wisdom, the Rock, God Himself come to His Temple", he also holds that the Messianic Claim went back primarily to Jesus Himself and that much of His ministry was shaped by His re-interpretation of the Messianic Kingdom.[1] This seems to open the door to a study of the knowledge of Jesus in the terms of His Messianic calling in which the whole context of Messiahship might afford an entrance into His thought and bear upon a study of the knowledge of Jesus.

In the Riddle of the New Testament there appears a skepticism quite as marked as that of Grensted. The authors write: "It is clear, both from Mark and from the common source of Matthew and Luke, that the general Tradition regarded these miracles of healing and exorcism as messianic, that is, as fulfilling Old Testament prophesies of the Messianic Age." While this quotation has first of all to do with miracles, it is illustrative of the attitude which places so great an importance upon the tradition that the tradition can become a barrier between the present day Christian and Jesus of Nazareth who is interpreted to him by the tradition. However, Hoskyns and Davey do not present a skepticism that goes so far as to do this. As with Grensted, so with Hoskyns and Davey there is a portal remaining through which access may be had to the person of the Jesus of History. This gate is Christ's consciousness of purpose. "No single strand in the evidence deprives Jesus of the conscious sense that He was bringing into being a new order

1 L.W. Grensted, The Person of Christ, 1933, pages 152-153, 39, 148ff.

and working out a purpose -- in complete isolation. Nowhere in the New Testament are the writers imposing an interpretation upon history." "The whole spiritual and moral power of the Primitive Church rested ultimately, not upon a mystical experience, but upon its belief that what Jesus had asserted to have been the purpose of His Life and Death was in very truth the purpose of God."

As a matter of fact, these same authors who treat with skepticism the attempt to get beyond the tradition to Jesus, make very strong statements themselves about the self-consciousness of Jesus. For example, they write that He was conscious of the task which had to be done, was aware that "the only future which matters for men and women depended upon the completion of His task", and believed that His was a road of obedience and upon Him had come to rest the whole weight of the Law and Prophets.[1]

For Grensted, the approach to Jesus is through His Messianic claim; for Hoskyns and Davey, it is through His consciousness of purpose. Each in his own way implies the conviction that the New Testament brings to the man of this day a real Person and has recorded some of His words and acts from which it is in a measure possible to discover what Jesus knew and to suggest how He came to know it. These arguments admit the legitimacy of the study of the knowledge of Jesus only in so far as that study is confined in its material to the realities interpreted by the early Church. However, these arguments by no means exhaust the case for a study such as this. Among others there are two further general

---

1 E.C. Hoskyns, N. Davey, The Riddle of the New Testament, 1931, pages 166-167, 249, 257, 250-252.

categories of approach to the subject, one which hinges the legitimacy of the examination upon certain assumptions which have to do with the authority of Jesus, another which argues from the nature of the Incarnation.

b. The study of the knowledge of Jesus through the correlation of His authority and knowledge.

One of the clearest statements of the former is that of D.W. Forrest.[1] According to him Christ's authority is absolute in the spiritual field. He writes that Christ's authority reveals a unique spiritual insight into history, even while it is confined to the ordinary knowledge of His day in all other fields, including the facts of history. Thus the knowledge of Christ can be studied with certainty in the field of the spirit, if not in the field of science. The problem here is not so much whether or not it is legitimate to embark upon such a study, but how to determine just where are the boundaries of the 'spiritual' in the matter of knowledge. Thus it appears that even while he protests against the metaphysics of Chalcedon and suggests that it is proper to study Christ's person as a unity, Forrest nevertheless creates for that study a method conducive to docetic tendency which thrives on any separation between 'spiritual' and whatever is proposed as its antithesis, in this case 'knowledge' as distinct from 'spiritual insight'.

When they are compared with the statements of H.C. Powell and S.T. Mason concerning the authority of Christ, Forrest's arguments appear

---

1 D.W. Forrest, The Authority of Christ, 1906.

most refined and cautious.[1] The latter of these men writes: "All that pertained to the Holy Scriptures belonged to the personal history of the Divine Son, and seems to have come back as such." Mason also states that Christ knew completely all things which profited for man's salvation, while Powell goes further and holds that to assume ignorance in the mind of Him "who might have had His human mind furnished with all knowledge which a human mind is capable of receiving...seems, not to say more, thoroughly unscientific". Once more the difficulty is not with what is permitted to be included in the investigation of the knowledge of Jesus, for, according to Mason, all things having to do with Holy Scripture are pertinent to this, but with what is excluded from the study, namely, those things which do not, supposedly, pertain to salvation. The person who inquires into the nature of Christ's knowledge would first have to determine what was included in the term salvation and would run the same risk of docetic tendency as the investigator who first must distinguish between intellectual and spiritual as a preparation for his investigation.

These various arguments for the legitimacy of the study of the knowledge of Jesus are in accord in asserting that the study is legitimate but should be directed along the particular channels outlined by each writer. These do not afford altogether satisfactory apologies for the study and there are others who express the apology in terms of the call-response relationship which existed between Jesus and the Father. William Temple expresses this point of view: "But what we are forced to

1 D.W. Forrest, The Authority of Christ, 1906, pages 57 to 65 makes reference to H.C. Powell, The Principle of the Incarnation, 1896, page 459, and to A.J. Mason, The Conditions of Our Lord's Life on Earth, 1896, pages 189-190.

by the work of Christ in the world is not the belief that He is the Absolute God in all His fullness of Being -- ("The Father is greater than I") -- but the belief that in all which directly concerns the spiritual relation of Man to God, Christ is identically one with the Father in the content of His Being -- ("I and the Father are One")." His Christology proceeds on the basis of this statement: "...in content of heart and will Christ is identically one with God."[1]

At first sight these quotations would seem to indicate that Temple is urging a separation between spirit ("all which directly concerns the spiritual relation of Man to God") and matter, between what pertains to salvation and what does not. That this is clearly not his intent appears in a footnote which states that will is the nisus and whole method of Christ's self in which the limitation of knowledge due to time and space seems to be strictly irrelevant.[2] These temporal and spacial limitations do not negatively affect the Incarnation; the Father-Son relationship includes them. Therefore, it is necessary neither to 'protect' the Incarnation from any possibility of limitation, nor to 'adjust' the Incarnation (e.g. through condescension or accommodation) so as to include the idea of limitation.

Thus along with considerable skepticism towards the arid discussion of the purely physical relationship between Christ and the world, there is introduced the apology for the study of the knowledge of Jesus in terms of relationship of Jesus to the Father and thus of man to God. G.S. Duncan suggests that the two foci "round which all the

---

1 William Temple, "The Divinity of Christ", Foundations, 1913, page 250.
2 Ibid., footnote, page 250.

ministry and all the teaching of Jesus revolved" are to be found "not in "the Kingdom" and "the Messiah", but in "God" and "man"".[1] So the rationale of the study of the limitations of the knowledge of Jesus is His revelation of the relationship of God to man. In this relationship matters of 'knowledge' are as vital as matters of 'spirit', unless redemption be restricted to the 'spiritual' nature of man, leaving his 'mind' unredeemed.

c. The study of the knowledge of Jesus as directed by the nature of the Incarnation.

There is still another approach towards an apology for the study of the knowledge of the Incarnate Christ which is based upon the nature of man himself, especially as that nature is interpreted by the Incarnation. The foundation for this apology is expressed by Dean Inge who comes very near, in this place quoted, to explaining the Incarnation as a 'universal principle'; "What theology calls the Incarnation -- i.e., not the conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but the taking of the manhood into God -- is, so far as we are concerned, the supreme object of creation. Taking as our guide the unique historical Incarnation in the past, we may say that the complete revelation to man of God's purposes concerning man, and the complete subordination of the human will to the Divine Will, so that it may act unswervingly in carrying out those purposes, are what constitutes union between the human

1 G.S. Duncan, Jesus, Son of Man, 1947, page 263.

and divine natures, and that the realisation of this union in mankind, as it was once realised in Christ, is the far-off Divine event towards which the whole creation moves. The Incarnation of the Word of God is not only an event in the past; it is the ideal which the world at large is striving to realise, and which is also, in a sense, the meaning of salvation for each one of us."[1]

This general principle of Incarnation as an ideal towards which creation is moving is the broad base on which the possibility of man understanding the Incarnation would rest, according to Dean Inge. This principle implies that there is in man -- perhaps in the "whole creation" -- something in relation to which the Incarnation has meaning and is understandable. This <u>something</u> should make the Incarnation in any one of its aspects a legitimate study for man. Certainly this point of view can be pressed too far; it can be taken to mean that the Incarnation expresses that which is inherent in man's nature and which enables him by his own effort to find out God, but it need not be pushed to this extreme. This general principle of Incarnation states that by His coming in the flesh God revealed to men in a unique way that in their very nature there existed the medium that could be used by God to communicate Himself to them.

L. Hodgson has adapted this general principle of Incarnation to express the nature of man's self: "It seems to me that what we mean by the self is the self-conscious unity of the subject of the experiences

---

[1] W.R. Inge, "The Person of Christ", <u>Contentio Veritatis</u>, 1907, page 64.

mediated through the bodily life of the individual; and that where all is going as it should this selfhood is not a static thing, but a growing entity in process of being created. The principle of its true growth I believe to be response to the companionship of God, so that the individual may be regarded either as striving upwards towards his true life from below or as having his true self communicated to him by God from above." He further argues that though the "One Perfect Man" in His development shared in the exercise of the divine power to an extent which we can hardly conceive, we still may in our lives find some experimental verification of what this sharing means. Therefore, it would follow that as man can understand something of what this sharing means, he can understand to some measure the manifestations of this sharing as they are expressed in the knowledge of Christ.[1]

R.C. Moberly has applied this principle of Incarnation and by it has stated that religious concept of personality which the Incarnate has revealed to be man's ideal and goal. He writes: "Yet to be men indeed -- is, after all, to be as gods; echoes of God; adequate responses to God;..."[2] From his work can be formulated an apology for the study of Christ's knowledge which rests upon the fact of personality as the common factor between Christ and mankind. In Moberly's explanation of the Incarnation, Christ is "the representative and inclusive summary of all mankind." As God, Christ is neither like God nor an aspect of God. His existence within the Divine Unity is by means of "real reciprocity of mutual relation" which describes the presence

1 L. Hodgson, And Was Made Man, 1933, pages 137-138.
2 R.C. Moberly, Problems and Principles, 1904, pages 48-65.

within God's being of both subject and object. What the Father is, the Son is identically; the Father and the Son are One. As Man, this same principle of "real reciprocity of mutual relation" applies to explain His affinity with the rest of mankind. Moberly points out that there is no person existing as an isolated individual and illustrates his idea of community by the family, the school, church, and all that is summed up in the term solidarity of the race. While mankind realizes this community only partially, Christ realized it perfectly: "It is precisely here that the relation of Jesus Christ to humanity is unique."[1] In this community shared by man with Christ, man shares the mind of Christ and has insight into the meaning and knowledge of Jesus not because he perceives the specific content of Christ's incarnate mind, but because he shares in the "reciprocation of love" and to a small (small because of sinfulness, not because 'He was divine, but we are human') extent knows as Christ knows.[2]

This understanding of the study of the limitations of the knowledge of Jesus converts the investigation into a spiritual exercise which follows St. Paul's imperative: "...let the mind which was in Christ be in you." It has its dangers in that it is capable of becoming a study 'spiritually' mediated and dissociated from the historical person of Jesus. It should be regarded, however, as an important factor in the study and is, perhaps, what lies behind the reverent attitude taken by many of the authors in this particular field.

---

1 R.C. Moberly, Atonement and Personality, 1907, pages 93, 86-88.
2 Problems and Principles, 1904, pages 5-11, 48, 64.

Upon the truth contained in these several positions outlined above the study of the limitation of the knowledge of Jesus stand. None of these apologies which has implied that it is possible for man to discriminate between the kinds of knowledge that were His so as to recognize at which point His knowledge went beyond 'human knowledge' or left the realm of the 'material' and entered into the 'spiritual' has been accepted. That Jesus knew as man is all that can be said; theologians have written again and again that the content of His knowledge cannot be measured by that of man and that it is only possible to endeavour to explain the presence of certain knowledge in His mind and, perhaps, the absence of certain knowledge, in the course of an attempt to discover how the knowledge was mediated to Him and how He used His knowledge.

II. Current forms of the discussion of the knowledge of Jesus.

There are two general forms which the discussion of the knowledge of Jesus has taken. The first form is the traditional statement in terms of the divine-human categories. Often in this description of the Person of Jesus there is presupposed a duality of substance in His nature -- there is that which is divine and that which is human. Accordingly, the person is sometimes examined on the assumption that since it is known that He is both human and divine, those things by which His person is expressed, the act and the word, can be catalogued into divisions of human and divine.

The second form which the discussion of the knowledge of Jesus may take is that based upon the assumption that His knowledge and how it was mediated to Him can best be understood when it is examined in the light, not of His divine-human nature, but of His dependent relationship as Son to the Father.

A third form is the discussion of Christ's knowledge as it is related to the concept of grace. This form has a good deal in common with the discussion in terms of His relationship to the Father; it has very little in common with a discussion in terms of the divine and human categories.

a. The discussion of the knowledge of Jesus in terms of substance: divine-human; omniscience-limitation.

When in Dissertations on Subjects Connected with the Incarnation Bishop Gore deals with the matter of the consciousness of Jesus, he very carefully traces the historical development of this study along the lines of the divine-human categories and concludes that there has been a constant tendency in the Church to fall into error by moving at one time too far from the humanity of Jesus towards the divinity and at other times too far from the divinity towards the humanity. He is joined by others who are disinclined to explain the Person of Jesus metaphysically by use of the divine and human for one of these two reasons. Nevertheless, this description of the Person has persisted and it is important that its expression in this day be analysed in order to point out its difficulties afresh. This dualistic explanation

of the limitations of the knowledge of Jesus finds expression particularly in the three authors, E.L. Mascall, H.M. Relton, and R.J. Cooke, each of whom adheres to its general statements while they differ considerably in detail.

E.L. Mascall conforms to scholastic doctrine, especially that of St. Thomas Aquinas. His position is summarized as follows:

The human knowledge of Jesus included three different elements; a perfect human participation in the Beatific Vision; an infused knowledge of all things that are humanly knowable; and an acquired knowledge derived by the ordinary process of human experience. But any statement must be safeguarded, according to Mascall, by pointing out that these three different kinds of knowledge are on different levels or in different spheres, and are not merely three different methods by which knowledge is acquired in the same sphere.[1]

He endeavours in his system to show "the possibility of the reconciliation of a real omniscience in our Lord's human nature with an equally real growth and development" and explicitly states that in so doing he is neither rejecting the Doctrine of Divine Impassibility, nor asserting that only God can be perfectly human, nor suggesting that a single consciousness at once human and divine was in Christ, nor assuming that the Word in the flesh was the limited Word. If he were but successful in all of this it would be a consideralbe reconciliation.

Mascall's system is based upon certain assumptions concerning the nature of the relationship of the divine and the human in the Person

---

[1] E.L. Mascall, Christ, the Christian, and the Church, 1946, pages 65-67.

of Jesus. He holds that the Incarnation is to be considered as "the exaltation of human nature to the level of Godhead by its union with the Person of the divine Word", and is not to be understood as "the compression of the divine Word within the limits of human nature". According to him, the two natures, the human and the divine, exist together not so much in unity as in intimacy, such intimacy that "the divine nature is not to be seen in its naked splendor; it is seen only as mediated through the instrumentality of the manhood", with the result that though some acts are such as any human being might perform, there are instances when "the manhood, while in no way constrained or suppressed, is clearly functioning as the instrument of the divine Word acting in his capacity as God". The forgiveness of sins and the raising of Lazarus are cited as examples of this.[1]

This principle of relationship between the human and the divine in Jesus is applied to the understanding of His will with this important result: "We must therefore not confuse together the act by which the divine Word holds his human nature in union with his person, and the acts of his human will by which, in the human nature, in complete concurrence with the divine will which as God he shares with the Father, he submits, in whatever way is appropriate to the actualities of the particular situation, to the limitations of our fallen state, in order to identify himself with us, to share our lot and to work our redemption."[2]

Such a description of the Person of Christ as above is bound to bear upon the question of the knowledge of Christ. Mascall applies

---

1 Ibid., pages 48-49.
2 Ibid., page 52.

his system to the problems of Christ's knowledge with reluctance and repudiates certain views of the knowledge of Jesus on the grounds that these arguments for His limitations are based not so much upon the established results of critical study as upon the prevailing mood of thought, certain philosophical prejudices, and psychological terminology. He concludes, however, that since the question of Christ's consciousness is raised, the discussion cannot be avoided, but is out of order. "I must, however, repeat that Christological doctrine is not primarily psychological but ontological. No amount of discussion of our Lord's psychology can have any direct bearing on the Catholic creeds and Chalcedonian definition. We must first assert without qualification that in the incarnate Lord two natures, a divine and a human, are inseparably and unconfusedly connected in the divine person of the eternal Word; any psychological discussion is subsequent and subsidiary."

After stating his reluctance to do so, Mascall embarks upon a lengthy explanation of the nature of the knowledge of the incarnate Christ. His summary of F.J. Hall's position affords an introduction to his own thought in this field: "We must however suppose, he [Hall] holds, that Christ's human mind is able to turn to the divine mind and draw from it whatever knowledge is appropriate to the human nature at its actual stage of development and to the needs of the particular situation...The only differences between this view and that which I shall expound will lie in the fact that, while he conceives the infusion of supranormal knowledge into Christ's human soul as being directly communicated from the divine knowledge on each occasion in whatever way is proper to the particular situation, I shall argue that there is a

permanent infusion into the human soul of all knowledge that it is intrinsically capable of receiving."[1]

This principle of permanent infusion is the key to Mascall's explanation of the knowledge that was Christ's during His life on earth. One of its implications is that there is a very real and fundamental difference between the type of knowledge common to all other men and that which was mediated to Jesus.

Mascall describes human nature as being essentially psycho-physical: "...in the human soul sensitive and intellectual activity are compresent and interrelated. And since in a finite human being person and nature are really identical and only logically distinguishable ...our knowledge is necessarily of this composite type."

When he goes on to describe the nature of Christ's knowledge, he writes: "In Christ, however, the person is really distinct from the human nature; the nature with which the person is really identical is not the human but the divine, and in this it shares in the omniscience which is the inalienable possession of the Godhead." Therefore it follows that the content of Christ's human mind included experimental knowledge acquired in the course of His development, and also infused knowledge "which is directly communicated to his human nature from the divine person who is its subject, and which is a participation in the divine omniscience and is limited only by the receptive capacity of human nature as such."

It was by way of this infused knowledge that Christ 'became

---

[1] Ibid., pages 54-57. F.J. Hall, The Kenotic Theory, (New York), 1898.

aware' of His deity, for though this infused knowledge exceeded the limits of His experimental knowledge the consciousness of deity was present in Christ's mind "by infusion from the person of the divine Word to which it is united". This infusion is necessary, argues Mascall, because of the nature of knowledge, some of which lies beyond the apprehension of the human soul. Not even the incarnate Word "can concentrate into itself the fullness of the divine activity; there must always be operations of deity which lie beyond its limits". Following this line of thought Mascall holds that it was not possible for Jesus either "by his life of obedience to the Father's will", or by "his study of the sacred Scriptures", or by "his perfect performance of the religion of the ancient people of God" to accept the proposition, "I am God". The acceptance of such a proposition is possible only because of the knowledge possessed in a certain sphere of Christ's consciousness.

He writes further: "Is it impossible to suppose that there is in his human mind what we might perhaps call a "stratification" of knowledge in such a way that, quite apart from the experimental knowledge which he acquires by the normal human use of intellect in conjunction with the senses, the Christ includes in himself, by infusion from the omniscience which his divine person possesses through its real identity with the divine nature, the possession of everything that is in principle knowable by man, while the exercise of this knowledge is adjusted, with the most exact and exquisite accuracy, to the precise needs of every situation with which he is confronted?"[1]

1 Ibid., pages 57-60.

One of the means by which the infusion takes place is through Beatific Vision. This is, however, not the vision which comes to the ordinary mystic. For man in general the infusion takes place "by an elevation of the soul in which the subject remains still a separate person from God and retains his own individuality". In Christ this infusion takes place "by the union of an impersonal human nature to the person of God the Word himself". "Thus there is no difference between the person who communicates the knowledge and the person who receives it, though there is a difference between either and the nature in which the knowledge is received."

The result of this infusion by Beatific Vision is that certain of the knowledge of Jesus was untranslatable. There is "a core of knowledge which is altogether present by infusion in his human mind and yet, by its very nature, defies translation on to the normal discursive human level, not, we must repeat, because he is in any way unwilling or impotent, but because it is inherently untranslatable." In his argument, Mascall asserts that there is nothing at all repugnant to sound doctrine in the idea that the Lord "possessed in his human soul, from the first moment of his life, the Beatific Vision of the divine Essence."[1]

There are yet two other expressions of the substantial explanation of the limitations of Christ's knowledge to be presented before an analysis will appear. Above has been given E.L. Mascall's solution to the problem through his principle of permanent infusion.

---

1 Ibid., pages 62-65. In outlining this point of view Mascall refers to St. Thomas, S. Theol., I, xxv, 3c; III, x; I, xii, 7c, and includes with this quotation concerning the Beatific Vision: "the human soul of Christ sees the whole Essence of God, yet does not comprehend it; since it does not see it totally." III, x, 1 ad 2m.

The two other expressions are the principle of enhypostasia of H.M. Relton and the act of will on the part of the pre-existent Christ in Cooke's presentation of a modern form of kenosis theory.

H.M. Relton accepts as the basis of his hypothesis the fact of dualism. He urges that it be recognized clearly as an inevitable factor that there is between the human and divine person of Christ "a generic difference". But while the difference is recognized, it is still possible, he believes, to press on to a fuller appreciation of "the Biblical truth of an essential affinity between the divine and the human natures". He continues, "If we consider the essential affinity between the two as the real basis of their union, and that by which alone such a union is rendered possible, we have gone a long way to mitigate the dualism which still remains."[1]

This affinity between the divine and the human Relton holds to be a cardinal doctrine of religion and the only cause of the soul's aspiration towards God and God's drawing the soul towards Himself. "Whatever of the Divine is in us as the result of this union is His Divinity. The relation of it to our human nature therefore should surely guide us in our effort to understand its relationship to His own human nature which was incorporated by Him into the unity of His person." However, he concludes, it is most important to retain the vital differences between God and man, and "if human and divine are never confused in us, neither were they in the person of Christ".

This principle of affinity in distinction, notwithstanding its difficulties, provides a starting place for Christological study.

---

[1] H.M. Relton, A Study in Christology, 1934, pages 122-127.

Relton continues his argument with the warning that Christology may not start from the assumption of an imperfect humanity into which flows the divine from above, but must rather start from the point of "a perfect Divine personality entering into, taking up into Himself, our human nature." Thus the starting point in Christology "is to be a unique consciousness human and divine in the person of the God-Man. Yet it is to be a single consciousness."[1] Relton supports this last statement with the doctrine of enhypostasia by which a consciousness truly human and truly Divine can exist as a single consciousness since "the Divine Logos, prior to the Incarnation, already possessed everything needful to enable Him to live a truly human life". Thus, "His Divine self-consciousness was, in virtue of its Divinity, a truly human self-consciousness."[2]

The single consciousness, "unique in its Divine character, eternal, unlimited" and at once human and divine "at every stage of His growth" was capable of giving Christ a knowledge of the fact that "He issued forth from God and came into time and space, and would leave the world and return whence He came". "It would mediate for Him His knowledge of His filial relationship with the Eternal Father, Whose Son He knew Himself to be. It would secure for Him an unbroken communion with God, in its fullness transcending our finite comprehension, but the effects of which were seen in His superhuman powers and activities, of the source of which He Himself is never in any doubt."

It would appear that what for Mascall was the Beatific Vision and infusion from the Divine to the human is for Relton the single

1 Ibid., pages 190-195.
2 Ibid., pages 226-227.

consciousness of One who was at all times Son of God and yet lived a truly human life. This single consciousness existing in two natures was the medium of Christ's knowledge. The result was unlimited knowledge; that Christ 'shared' the limitations of man meant only that in Him the particular was expressing the universal. The universal was thus revealed, but it was not limited by the particular. The form only of Christ's consciousness was human; the content was Divine.

Of this single consciousness, Relton writes further: "Its range, viewed from one standpoint was unlimited -- viewed from another standpoint, was limited and yet none the less self-limited." Thus it is that the same self-consciousness "could mediate two sets of knowledge -- all that He knew as God, all that He came to know as the result of His earthly experiences in the days of His flesh". According to Relton it does not follow that since He condescended to live under 'finite' conditions "He must necessarily have ceased to live and move and have His Being in that larger and vaster universe native to His personality as the Divine Son of God". Relton's incarnate Christ is "One who lived a truly human and finite existence, whilst at the same time transcending these limitations at will".[1]

There occurs in one of the closing chapters of Relton's A Study in Christology a concise expression of the enhypostasia theory as it has appeared above in detail: "The doctrine of the Enhypostasia gives us the Unlimited Divine Logos as the Ego of the manhood in the Incarnate Christ. His self-consciousness was not only truly human, but it was the

1 Ibid., pages 230-234.

self-consciousness of One who was the Incarnate Deity. He did not cease to be God when He became Man, nor lose the consciousness of Himself as God transcendent when He became God in manhood."[1]

The last of these arguments of this section is that of R.J. Cooke in The Incarnation and Recent Criticism. The primary problem dealt with in his description of the person of Christ is this: How do the superhuman and the human exist together in One person? He affirms the Kenosis theory in so far as it expresses the truth that while the Infinite One manifested Himself in the human body He remained what He was, the superhuman, and was neither depotentiated Logos nor Eternal Being become finite, "but while he manifests himself in the human he still remains what he is, the superhuman".[2]

It is in terms of will that Cooke gives his answers to the problem of how divinity and humanity exist together in one person: "By the exercise of infinite will, the central principle of all sentient being, human or divine, he assumed human nature, with its limitations in the womb of the virgin." Christ continued none the less to possess the "fullness of the Godhead, and outside the sphere of humanity he still exercised cosmic functions, but as man every attribute of his deity is limited, is restricted, is placed alongside of or united with the powers and attributes of the human spirit". "Christ possessed the fullness of the Eternal. He possessed omnipotence, omnipresence, and all other essential attributes of God. But he was not at all times exclusively conscious of his infinite knowledge and power apart from his human limitations. He did not know himself at all times as

1 Ibid., page 253.
2 R.J. Cooke, The Incarnation and Recent Criticism, 1907, pages 205-213.

absolutely God, yet he knows he is divine. Were he conscious, every moment and always, of his essential Godhood he could not have been conscious at that same moment of his manhood, and the humanity of him would have been pushed into the background or would have been lost in his divinity." And again, "He possessed knowledge and power which were divine, but the clear, unclouded consciousness of the attributes of the Eternal was not at every moment of his life a present and distinctly felt experience. Only when the occasion arises, when the vital moment arrives which by reason of moral or other issues demands the voice and deed of divinity, then, and then only, does the mighty God appear in majesty and wonder-working power...God never appears beyond the human." Cooke goes on to show how Jesus grew in wisdom and stature until "with the development of the years...Christ knows that he is the Son of God, he knows that he is the everlasting Son of the Father who existed in eternal glory before all worlds began".

This dual nature in which at different times humanity and deity are manifest is explained by this proposition: "given the person of Christ -- a human and a divine personality -- the manifestations of that personality must also be human and divine."[1]

According to this author the dual nature in Christ is further expressed in the two classes of scripture texts which are related to His knowledge, the one which discloses His knowledge as surpassing human experience and the other which indicates the limitations of His knowledge.[2]

---

1 R.J. Cooke, The Incarnation and Recent Criticism, 1907, pages 213-219.
2 Ibid., pages 219-220. Knowledge as surpassing human experience: Mt 11:21, 27; 17:27; Mk 14:30; Lk 9:47; 19:30; 22:10; Jn 1:14; 2:24, 25; 4:17, 29, 47, 50; 13:11. Limited knowledge: Mt 12:15, 24; Mk 6:6; 11:13; 12:28; 13:32; Lk 2:40, 49, 52; 8:30; Jn 4:1-3; 11:34.

Of these texts Cooke writes: "...whatever irreconcilability there may be between them is no greater than the fact or facts they record; no greater than that which exists between his humanity and his divinity in one personality." Christ at times did possess knowledge which surpassed human experience, and even when His knowledge was limited according to his humanity, "the Christ who does not know is always the Christ who can know".[1]

All that Cooke does to explain how this knowledge was mediated to the Incarnate Christ is to state that it must have been "communicated according to the laws of mind".[2] He goes on to say that it would be quite useless to inquire just how this communication occurred so that the human mind in any way apart from the Logos' mind could apprehend and make known in speech when necessary the secret things of God. However, when answering to the possibility of having presented a dualistic Christology, he does suggest an explanation of how the knowledge of Christ was mediated to Him. He declares he does not assert "two homogeneous magnitudes" but rather, since both the divine and human souls are spirit, the divine can enter into and become one with the human. In spiritual endowment, there exists a perfect equality between the human and the divine in Christ, and where there is such a perfect equality of oneness there can be no duality.[3]

Together these three statements of Christology by Mascall,

---

1 Ibid., page 224.
2 Ibid., page 222.
3 Ibid., pages 226-227: "The human spirit is the image of the divine spirit, and therefore since the two are essentially alike, there can be neither distinction, contradiction, nor opposition, but perfect equality only, and perfect oneness." He also makes this statement: "...the human soul of the Christ never had an instant's existence separate and distinct from the uncreated Logos."

Relton and Cooke, express one of the two forms in which the limitation of the knowledge of Jesus is discussed. Each in its own way relies upon the assumption of a duality in Christ's nature and (although Cooke denies this) a given distinction between the divine and human, deity and manhood in Jesus. They imply in their acceptance of this assumption that the explanation of the person of Christ consists in a satisfactory answer to the question of how these two substances exist in One person and how they effect each other, for example, how the humanity 'limits' the omniscience of the divinity. In so far as these positions protect the imponderable in the person of Christ, in so far as they stress the fact that He was truly God incarnate, they afford a valuable form for the expression of His knowledge and its limitations. Sometimes, however, the person of Christ is so stated as implicitly to deny the fact of limitation.

When Mascall endeavours to reconcile omniscience with growth and development in the life of Christ on earth he fails in so far as he sets them side by side as mutually exclusive, as if the omniscience had to do with an element in the person of Christ that is completely foreign to His human nature. It appears that whenever it is necessary for Christ to apply His omniscience, the knowledge is infused to His human nature and adjusted to the precise needs of the situation. Even when it is considered that Mascall describes this omniscience which is applied at given times to given situations not as knowledge equal to the omniscience of God as such, but what is in principle knowable by man, there remains a strong element of automatism in this expression of the manner in which knowledge is mediated to Christ. It is as if in the person of Christ there is present that knowledge which is quite

automatically given to His human nature whenever there arises a need for such knowledge. With such an explanation as this Mascall has set up two centres within Christ — indeed three, by his threefold stratification of knowledge — and the higher strata feed the lower which exercise in perfect adjustment this knowledge received from the higher strata. The question is: How does that adjustment take place? Who or what adjusts? If the human nature receives knowledge from the divine nature and then adjusts that knowledge to the situation, it is then master of the knowledge received, in which case the human nature would be equal to the divine in the matter of knowledge. But this is not the case; the human nature is far inferior to the divine in Mascall's presentation. Surely there is an element of unreality in describing the person of Christ so substantially as this. If the divine infuses into the human whatever is necessary to the occasion, there is no reality to Christ's growth, nor to His suffering and temptations. There would be in His person from the beginning that which would automatically provide the knowledge for each situation as it occurs.

This note of unreality about Mascall's expression of Christ's humanity is further revealed by his description of the manhood in Christ existing as "an instrument of the divine word acting in his capacity as God." If he means that the manhood was the active instrument of God's revelation, then he is describing Jesus in the same manner as the prophets could be described, as men of God who heard His voice and responded to it. However, it would appear likely that Mascall is intending a passive humanity in Jesus, for the whole system of infusion invites the interpretation that it is a definition of a grossly automatic Incarnation. While it would not be fair to Mascall so to interpret

his intention in developing his hypothesis of infusion, it is none the less necessary to point out that whenever there is placed side by side the divine and the human with the infusion from the divine as that which makes 'real' the Incarnation, then the humanity is likely to suffer a defeat and be reduced to the nature of an instrument in the hands of an almighty power.

Mascall warns against the confusion of the act "by which the divine word holds his human nature in union with his person", which is the act of infusion, with the "acts of his human will" by which as God He shares the will of the Father and submits to the limitations of fallen nature in order to identify Himself with mankind. There are three difficulties with this statement: First, if the divine Word is constantly by its will protecting the union which took place in the Incarnation and making it sure, then there was really never a complete incarnation. This seems to say that there was held in reserve, as it were, the power sufficient to restrain the human nature from asserting itself to the extent of 'damaging' the Incarnation. It would follow then that Gethsemene was not a real matter for concern, for the prayer of Christ made there was for something already secured by that portion of the divine Word which was restraining the human will from going too far in its own desire. Second, if there is the divine word always holding together the union of human nature to His person, what then is the meaning of a human will also existing as at one with the Father's will? That Christ was limited, that He identified Himself with mankind, that He submitted to the will of the Father -- none of these is more than an episode in a drama intended to show mankind what is the will of

the Father. The limitations of Christ are meaningless as far as His effort to be true to the Father's will are concerned, for the divine will would always be present to prevent these limitations from really affecting the person of Christ. The third and less obvious difficulty seems to be the creation of a four-person Godhead. There is the Spirit, the Father, the divine Word, and that fourth something which is human nature held in union with the Divine nature by the exercise of the will of the divine Word.

Mascall has endeavoured to present the divine Christ who came in the flesh. Is it not possible that in his extreme regard for the assertion of the divinity he has in fact described Jesus as a man who is used as God's instrument, given knowledge when the occasion demanded it, and prevented from becoming too inhibited in His limited humanity by the constant uplifting of the divine Word? For these several reasons Mascall's system might be questioned as to its possible docetic tendencies.

When Relton's hypothesis is considered, it appears that he has successfully overcome in terminology the problem of the mutual exclusiveness of the terms divine and human by holding that the humanity of Jesus was that same humanity which had existed at all times in the Godhead. Without equivocation he states a singleness of consciousness due to the essential and pre-existent affinity between the humanity and divinity of Christ. He states a real Incarnation in which the limitations of human nature which Jesus experienced were nevertheless the limitations of a divine consciousness.

In form this statement of the limitations of knowledge appears to be without the danger of docetic tendency and also a positive

contribution to the movement away from the dualistic interpretations of the Incarnation. However, in application the form appears neither to avoid the older dualism or the docetic tendency. Relton's argument for a unity of person through the enhypostasia theory places that unity on the divinity 'side' of the two-natured person of Christ, almost as if the choice were consciously present to Him to define the unity in terms of the humanity or the divinity. That Relton chose to place his unity within the divinity of Christ is evident in his comparison between the Synoptic Gospels and that of St. John. He holds that each presents an historically real person, Jesus, but that there is a difference of stress between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel. He writes: "Jesus looking outwards towards men is one side of the picture which the Synoptists reveal, but this is quite incomprehensible by itself and except in conjunction with the other side upon which St. John lays most stress -- Jesus looking inwards towards God."[1] That He observed limitations among men is not to say that He shared in these limitations, which He quite clearly did not according to Relton's own statement of Christ as "one who lived a truly human and finite existence, whilst at the same time transcending these limitations at will".

Relton presents this transcendent quality of Jesus again in another way: "We are not bound to believe that as His ministry proceeded His thoughts became clearer and the meaning and end of it grew plainer to His mind...it was not His mind which became more and more illumined with the thought of the Kingdom, nor that it was His idea about it which grew and even altered; it is equally permissable

---

[1] H.M. Relton, A Study in Christology, page 241.

to assume that He knew its nature and His purpose from the outset of His public ministry, and deliberately set Himself to instruct the minds of His followers in its principles and truly spiritual character."[1]

This definitely limits the idea of growth in the knowledge of Jesus and likewise makes questionable a real limitation of His knowledge. Relton can write that the key to the universality of Christ's person "lies in its truly human character, and the key to its truly human character lies in the fact that it was truly Divine" and at the same place describe this humanity of Christ as that which pre-existed as the human element in God.

The knowledge contained in the mind of such a person as Jesus is in Relton's argument that which is present by reason of the inherent nature of the person and not by attainment through suffering, temptation, prayer and the grace of God. These important elements in the Incarnate One become secondary when the knowledge of Christ is expressed in this substantial form. For example, Relton comments upon Christ's claim to be the judge of the world and His claim to be God. The claim to judgeship is based upon "a knowledge nothing less than omniscient in its range. We expect such a claim to be made by One conscious of the absolute character of His personality in its relationship with all mankind. It implies a knowledge of Himself as God in all the fullness of His omnipotent power. If the conditions of His earthly life prevented His having a knowledge of Himself anything less than this, could he have made the claim?"[2]

This claim to be God is explained further in the interpretation

---

[1] Ibid., pages 243-244.
[2] Ibid., page 258.

of Matthew 11:25: "The passage implies not only a consciousness of a unique relationship to God, but the basis of it is His pre-existence with God, antecedent to His birth as a human being...The central constituent in the consciousness of Jesus is the complete and unclouded sense of this filial relationship, evidenced at once by perfect mutuality of knowledge and love between Himself and the Father, and perfect submission and response to the Father's will."[1] It is characteristic of his argument that Relton describes this submission, love, and knowledge as evidence and not as cause or even expression of the filial relationship.

R.J. Cooke in his turn does not hesitate to state a real humanity in Christ, a humanity equal to all the usual requirements of daily living. It would appear, however, that when any crisis or need of supreme revelation occurred in the life of the Incarnate, it was through the divine nature that the need was met. In effect, the humanity played no crucial part in the incarnation and was passed by whenever necessary in order that the divinity might speak. Christ so described is unreal and the saving efficacy of the Incarnation is reduced to nothing more than a divine incursion into what at other times appeared to be 'human' existence.

This note of unreality in the description of the person of Christ is variously present. For example, how could Cooke express a true incarnation in which the majesty of the Godhead appeared only when the occasion demanded? Indeed, according to him the content of the witness to Christ in the Gospels is divided into human divine categories.

---

1 Ibid., page 260.

These criticism of the three presentations of the limitations of the knowledge of Jesus by Mascall, Relton, and Cooke, undoubtedly criticise more than was in the intent of the authors' minds. However, they together invite a restatement of the hyposthesis which has appeared before in previous chapters, that when the nature of the person of Christ is presented in terms originally designed to indicate and preserve the distinct humanity and divinity of Christ, but are now used to show forth a unity in Christ and to explain the unusual in His life, divinity is bound to rule at the expense of the humanity which becomes but the passive object of infusion from the divine, or instrument of the divine Will. In the case of the knowledge of Christ, the substantial explanation in the terms of divine and human presents a person who quite automatically received in His humanity that necessary knowledge from the divinity by which He could meet each situation as it arose, or who was in His humanity an occultation of that divinity which nevertheless shone through at times to publish an oracle of all-knowing wisdom.

Between the above discussion of the knowledge of Jesus in terms of substance and the next form of that discussion in terms of relationship is a mediating position outlined by William Sanday as he describes the person of Christ in psychological terms, yet without going so far as to deny the mystery in that person. His argument may now be held to fail for its outdated psychology, but on the whole it is an introduction to that method which states the person of Christ and the limited knowledge through terms of relationship and response rather than substance.

Sanday describes personality as a comprehensive something which includes both the conscious and unconscious states, the latter having been at one time conscious and retaining the potentiality of again becoming conscious. The comprehensive personality seems to be a self larger than either of these and is the unifying principle and organizing power of the inner self. (H.R. Mackintosh criticises this terminology of "comprehensive personality" and Sanday accepts his criticism in favour of an "imminent unity" on the grounds that it is more expressive of a unity through particulars than over them.) These two selves are one and indivisible, inseparable and continuous. However, it is through the inner self, the subliminal self, that the divine influence comes to bear upon the person.[1]

This explanation of the person locates the source of Christ's divinity in the subliminal impulses of the inner life which are manifested through the common life He shared with men. Sanday's argument is that the historical Christologies have through their use of the divine and human categories divided by a vertical line the events in the life of Christ. This theory of the subliminal self would, he claims, divide by a horizontal line "between the upper human medium, which is the proper and natural field of all active expression, and those lower deeps which are no less the proper and natural home of whatever is divine". Only so much of the divine in Christ could be expressed

1 William Sanday, Personality in Christ and in Ourselves, 1911, pages 15-32. See also, Christologies Ancient and Modern, 1910, page 159: The subconscious is the "proper seat or locus of all divine indwelling, or divine action upon the human soul...The corresponding subliminal consciousness is the proper seat or locus of the Deity of the Incarnate Christ."

as the thoroughly human consciousness was capable of expressing. However, since the whole self is more than the conscious self, "in our Lord the manifested Life was only, as it were, an index to the total Life of which the visible activities were but a relatively small portion".[1]

Sanday affirms the principle of growth in all fields of Christ's incarnate life and suggests that through moral maturation and character building in free choice His conscious self reached down to make contact with the latent powers which had throughout His life "been more abundant and nearer at hand than with others."[2]

As a mediating position Sanday's arguments seem to share the difficulties of the substantial divine-human form while at the same time looking forward toward the next method of describing Christ's limitations. It is possible to criticise Sanday's position as one merely substituting the categories conscious and unconscious for the human and divine. He does in fact refer at one time to the life of Jesus as an occultation in which the full display of His divine power was deliberately restrained. This occultation is held to be eschatological in that it points towards a time when the restraint would not be imposed.[3] This is certainly a description of an automatic use of the humanity by Christ for the purposes of condescension to the limited perception of mankind and is a statement which suggests that the time will come when the Incarnation can be left behind, a time of disincarnation.

While these criticisms point towards an element of unreality in the humanity of Christ and coincide with the criticisms pointed at the

---

1 W. Sanday, Christologies Ancient and Modern, pages 165-179.
2 Ibid., page 184.
3 W. Sanday, The Life of Christ in Recent Research, 1908, pages 136-141.

substantial form of representing Christ's limitations, the position does point a way forward. It explains that as Christ matured, so did He tap the potentialities of His deeper self. This position foreshadows a description of His limitations as a part of the life in which He was suffering, being tried and tested, and all the while attaining to and maintaining a oneness of will with the Father in relationship with the Father and not by reason of His own essential nature. Sanday does not go so far as to express this supporting relationship between Jesus and the Father, but it may be implied in his statements of the maturation of Jesus and His realization of powers potentially within Him at all times. The question, as it is handled by Sanday, seems to be changing from 'What did Jesus know because He was divine?' to 'What knowledge did the Father reveal to the Son so as to support Him in His life on earth?' and 'How was that knowledge mediated to Jesus?'

b. <u>The Discussion of the knowledge of Jesus in the terms of relationship: Father-Son; Universal-Particular.</u>

The second form of expression of the limitations of the knowledge of Jesus is that which relies upon the principle that the particular is capable of manifesting the universal and that the universal is unknowable apart from the particular, which in Christological terms becomes, "No one cometh to the Father but by me". This explanation is a continuation and an application to another situation of that same I-Thou solution which is applied to the problem of miracle in the first chapter of this thesis where A. Galloway's <u>The Cosmic Christ</u> is affirmed

as affording a way out of the dualism between nature and spirit present in many of the explanations of the miracles of Jesus.

Also, the hypothesis of faith and grace has been suggested alongside this universal-particular argument as an explanation of the person of Christ and is one more reaction against the older dualistic Christological expressions. For example, A.E. Garvie criticises that older Christology for having always wavered between "the absorption of the human in the divine nature to secure the unity of the person" and "the reduction of the personal unity to an abstract term in order to maintain the distinction of the two natures". In its place he suggests a Christology on the basis of dynamic personality, a personality "capable in God of self-limitation, and in man of self-development; if we think of both, because of their affinity, as mutually attractive, a downward movement of God in grace and an upward movement of man in faith, then the divine-human personality of Jesus becomes not only a possibility, but almost a necessity of thought".[1]

In either case, the universal-particular or faith-grace interpretation, the person of Christ is expressed in the form of relationship rather than substance, as is evident in the following examples.

A.E.J. Rawlinson interprets the knowledge of Christ and especially that expression of it in Matthew 11:25, as a knowing in the Old Testament sense of being known by God and knowing God and not at all in the Gnostic sense of Christ's knowing and mediating the saving 'knowledge'. This knowledge in Christ was part of the mystery of His

---

[1] A.E. Garvie, A Handbook of Christian Apologetics, 1913, pages 152-153.

person in Christ's own mind and could best be expressed in the terms of Father and Son. Rawlinson gives a tentative affirmation to the sentiments of those who have regarded filial consciousness as "constituting the indispensible psychological presupposition of the possibility of His acceptance of the Messianic vocation". However, to Rawlinson the Father-Son expression on the lips of Jesus was not simply a Messianic formula or title: "...it was rather the expression of some profound and specific awareness of inner personal relationship to God, the characteristic form under which the ultimate mystery of His person was interpreted to His own human mind."[1]

G.S. Duncan expresses the knowledge of sonship in Christ as a consciousness which is neither an other-worldly awareness of the nature of His Person nor a vague perception of a future office, but a present realization of a present call to mission. Duncan suggests that Jesus based His authority on a present experience of sonship, and to the degree that this presentness is taken seriously, so would the knowledge of Jesus be confined to the present working out of the Son's vocation and would not necessarily, by reason of the divinity of the Son, include a realm of knowledge exceeding the immediate limits of the call. Perhaps the greater the emphasis on this present experience of sonship, the greater is the emphasis likely to be placed upon the continuing support of the Son by the Father as the present appeared new each day to Jesus.[2]

In The Death of Jesus, A.B. Macaulay describes Jesus as ever

---

[1] A.E.J. Rawlinson, The New Testament Doctrine of the Christ, 1926, pages 251-264.

[2] G.S. Duncan, Jesus, Son of Man, 1947, Chapters IX and X.

being conscious of Himself as the Father's Son without cognizance of any beginning. He writes: "It will be allowed that He only realised gradually, and, may we not venture to say, to His surprise, that He was unique in the sense of personal relationship to God." The more Jesus realized and acted on this consciousness of Sonship, the more did He meet with enmity and suffering. Thus the death of Jesus itself is interpreted in the terms of this relationship to the Father called Sonship.[1]

C.E. Raven is another contributor to this relationship point of view. He brings forward neither an elaborate nor a complete statement of the knowledge of Jesus, for this he believes to be an impossible feat: "Omnia abeunt in mysterium: it is difficult to appreciate and still more difficult to define the secret quality of any personality, however well we know its story or impact upon the world: and in the case of Jesus we find ourselves faced with One who transcends all our criteria and manifestly belongs to a level of being which few can even apprehend and none may hope to describe."

Of His consciousness, Raven simply states: "He was aware of an unique relation to God." This statement grows in meaning as it is understood to what extent this intimacy of union with God implies "a depth of emotional, intellectual and moral experience of God". As affecting the whole self of Jesus, the uniqueness is more than the sum of these, however, and must be expressed not only through them, but through the whole quality of His person. This quality is manifested

---

[1] A.B. Macaulay, The Death of Jesus, 1938, page 91.

in the manner in which He took the existing modes of thought and conduct and related them to His own Gospel: "He did so, selecting from them what He could use, fulfilling, expanding, surpassing, superseding them." Once He had taken all the methods at His disposal that a teacher could use, He still found them inadequate and took the one way remaining — "Come unto Me".[1]

Jesus by His use of existing modes which terminated in His invitation to devotion to Himself has revealed that the particular can be made to manifest the universal. The revelation is not explained in terms of the capacity of the finite for the infinite, but rather by showing that "the essential character of the universe cannot be described in lower than personal terms".[2]

C.E. Raven has not come down on either side of the question of what did Jesus think of all this power which through Him could transform men in the person-to-person contact with God in Christ; he does not state how Jesus knew the Father nor how He came to select the existent modes of thought that were suitable to His purpose. Raven does, however, seem to lift the discussion of the knowledge of Jesus to a much higher plane than the mere speculation upon the effect of the humanity upon the divinity or the divinity upon the humanity. He does not negatively state Christ's knowledge as that limited by His humanity, but positively states it as that knowledge which can take what is existent in the thought of the world — not that metaphysical thought of pre-existence, for example, which had not during the earthly life of

---

1 C.E. Raven, Jesus and the Gospel of Love, 1931, pages 265, 278, 280.
2 , "The Secret of Christ", Christianity and the Crisis, 1933, page 164.

Jesus been conceived in men's minds by the Resurrection — and express through it universal truth. On the one hand this says that Jesus was not limited at all. God is not limited by the particular but can use it, without, however, destroying its particularity. On the other hand, it says that Jesus was limited to His immediate situation, without, however, His being concerned with this limitation. Jesus acted as if what has been termed limitation was the gift of God, again grace, given to Him to use during His lifetime to bring home His message and carry out His call. Surely at first sight this must appear as a mere substitution of the word grace in the place of those other expressions which have been criticized as docetically inclined explanations of a knowledge inherently present as all-knowing, a substitution which would carry with it the same criticism. However, this is free grace, not forced grace. In the next section the relationship between grace and knowledge will be more fully developed.

L. Hodgson applies this principle that the universal can be expressed through the particular with the result that in the place of an omniscience limited by the descent of the second person of the Trinity into an earthly existence, Jesus is held to possess divine ignorance. But this conclusion is the result of a lengthy argument.

First, according to Hodgson, the dualistic inheritance from the Fathers should be modified so as not to imply an antipathy between God and creation. In this modification the distinction between "the eternal being of God" and "the temporal becoming of creation" should be retained unimpaired, but the stress should lie upon the creation out of nothing. The result of these attitudes in Christology is to recognize

its problems as historical and psychological, not "the union of two ousiai, viewed, so to speak, ab extra". Hodgson considers the final test of any Christology to be its capability of accounting for the Christ of history as subject of a truly human experience differing from ours not merely in degree but in kind, so as to be that experience of the eternal second person of the Trinity.[1]

This endeavour on the part of Hodgson to understand the historical Christ who is the Eternal Son results in a rejection of the division of His knowledge into a rational limitation and a revelational non-limitation. Hodgson writes: "We must honestly acknowledge that even such an idea as that of His own pre-existence might have come to Him from current teaching about the expected Messiah . Here, as in the case of His moral teaching, we must look for evidence of His divine insight...in the reaction of His mind to the teaching He happened to meet through His being born and growing up in Palestine at the beginning of our era."[2]

The point of view of this approach to the knowledge of Christ is then one which assumes neither the possibility nor the impossibility of the Son's knowing certain things, but takes it for granted that this person is God incarnate and directs its attention to the conditions under which the Incarnation took place. Hodgson explicitly point out that the problem of Christ's ignorance does not concern the fact of the Incarnation, and this is probably why He terms it divine ignorance.

There are, according to Hodgson's analysis, three general methods of interpreting Christ's knowledge. First is that interpretation

1 L. Hodgson, "The Incarnation", Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation, A.E.J. Rawlinson, ed., 1933, pages 363-367.
2 L. Hodgson, And Was Made Man, 1933, page 54.

which has been discussed above in the critique of those systems which attribute to Jesus a constant sharing in the divine omniscience. While this view may not be much in evidence currently, it does represent the practical effect of the second method which implies a dualistic sort of knowledge in which the omniscient Jesus knows as God what He does not know as man. Such a position is expressed in the examples previously given of the division of Scripture into those texts which can be ascribed to His Godhead and those which reflect His limited humanity. Hodgson cites as a further example the kenotic theory of C. Gore in which the proposition is developed that Jesus spoke with the knowledge of God and at the same time in matters of science and history shared the knowledge of His day.

The third interpretation or method is Hodgson's positive contribution to the study of the limitations of the knowledge of Christ. He will not permit the suggestion that a limitation of mind as well as body in the person of Christ deprives the Lord's teaching of any authority; he finds the expression of the divinity of Jesus actually coming through this intellectual limitation and writes: "In the sphere of knowledge the specifically human activity is the recognition of universals in particular instances of them occurring in time and space. The matters upon which our Lord's mind was exercised, therefore, were those particular traditions, events, etc., presented to Him during His thirty years or so of life in Palestine some two thousand years ago; the authority of His teaching comes from the fact that all His judgments upon them were the judgments of One whose inner life was a life of continuous and unbroken communion with the Father". When

one applies this principle, he will find, as he searches for the manner of man Christ was, "One who lives 'by nature' at a level to which he himself fitfully strives to attain 'by grace'".[1]

This last statement of Hodgson's has in it the difficulty of the nature-grace antithesis which adds to an otherwise straightforward expression of the person of Christ the veiled suggestion that He was yet inherently, substantially, 'by nature', different from other men. Granted that He was different, is it necessary to explain that difference in this more or less substantial terminology of 'by nature'? To describe the difference between Christ and other men as if in one case a perfection by nature existed and in the other an attainment by grace seems once again to draw near to the difficulties of the dualistic interpretation of the person as pointed out previously. Perhaps the phrase 'by nature' is not intended by Hodgson to imply all this, but is meant rather to point out the uniqueness of Christ. That this latter interpretation is Hodgson's intent is attested by the fuller development of his argument.

Hodgson states that the life of Jesus was an instance of a man in mystical communion with God. But this communion which other men share on occasion by grace, was by nature Christ's, and while others strive for this communion by quitting the world, Jesus manifested in the particulars of everyday existence. Once again, the difficulty of the 'by nature' and 'by grace' division of things, but here the

---

[1] L. Hodgson, "The Knowledge of Christ Incarnate", A New Commentary on Holy Scripture, Charles Gore, ed., 1928, Part III, pages 300-301.

'nature' that was Christ's is clearly not that metaphysical omniscience which overruled His humanity, but was an ability to express the universal in the particular -- and in this ability consisted His divinity. Hodgson points out that His teaching was the result of applying His insight as living in heavenly places to the events about Him, and so states a rule of biblical interpretation. "It is the suggestion of this book that the Gospels are best explained on the Catholic doctrine of Christ as God made Man; or the hypothesis that during His life on earth His godhead was veiled in His manhood. He was conscious of standing in a relationship to the Father which was unique, and could only be explained when the Church came to reflect upon it, by the doctrine of His divinity. But in the perfection of His humanity He was human in mind as well as body. It is not, then, surprising that we should find in the Gospels evidence that this knowledge of His unique Sonship reached His mind through the channels of His experience on earth." The uniqueness of Christ which is a term with such a variety of interpretation means for Hodgson a uniqueness which was "forced upon our Lord's attention at every stage of His life on earth" as He observed, having all His life known the Father, how little this experience was shared by others, how misunderstanding was the crowd, and how even His disciples were astonished and failed to understand Him.[1]

The divinity of Christ rested in His doing God's will, which is to have God's mind and outlook, and therefore to apprehend the universal even while it is manifested in the particular. This is the

---

1 L. Hodgson, And Was Made Man, pages 30-47.

meaning of the unbroken, continuous communion of Christ with the Father. Within this communion there existed a perfectly human knowledge, relative in its particulars to His day but looking out upon His day with the mind of God and perceiving universals that transcended the relativity of His thought-form. This seems to be in summary what Hodgson holds regarding Christ's limited knowledge, His <u>divine ignorance</u>. This is a knowledge derived. It is limited knowledge common to man and at the same time perfect knowledge in that it has the outlook of God, not in a substantial sense of being God's knowledge, but God's outlook on the matters relative to the stage of history in which Jesus appeared. The authority of Jesus rests in this -- He knew and lived in the perfect relationship of particular to universal. Christ looked out upon the particular with the mind of God and in like manner the faithful look out upon the world with the mind of Christ. It is an outlook derived not from inherent capability, but it is an act of faith.

c. <u>The discussion of the knowledge of Jesus in terms of grace</u>.

At the base of all this discussion about the limited knowledge of Jesus are the questions: 'How was it possible for the Incarnate God to be limited in knowledge?' and 'How through this limitation of knowledge was God revealed?' D.M. Baillie puts at the center of his explanation of the Incarnation the paradox of grace which is most familiar as expressed by St. Paul who lived not of himself by only as Christ lived in him. This is the paradox of the free action of the

self which is at the same time the action only of God. For Christ the expression took the form, 'I....yet not I, but the Father', and the highest claims made by Him "are made in such a way that they sound rather like disclaimers". "The higher then become, the more do they refer themselves to God, giving God all the Glory. Though it is a real man that is speaking, they are not human claims at all: they do not claim anything for the human achievement, but ascribe it all to God....The God-Man is the only man who claims nothing for Himself, but all for God."[1]

The argument set forth by D.M. Baillie seems to suggest that Jesus can be thought of as the recipient of grace, and that the paradox of grace is a pointer towards an understanding of the mystery of the Incarnation. As 'Not I, but the grace of God' is the confession of many who live imperfectly the Christian life, it is that same type of paradox which explains the entire earthly life of Christ. As all the goodness in man is wrought by God, so all the goodness in Jesus "can ultimately be described only as the human side of a divine reality, which, so to say, was divine before it was human". "The divine is always prevenient, so that however far back one may go in the life of Jesus, one can never reach a point that would meet the requirements of 'Adoptionism', just as one can never reach a point of which a 'Pelagian' account would be satisfactory. It is not adoption that we have to deal with, but Incarnation."[2]

The immediate question is whether or not this description of

---

1 D.M. Baillie, God Was in Christ, 1948, page 126-127.
2 Ibid., page 130.

the Incarnation as a life lived absolutely by the grace of God offers a further contribution towards the understanding of what has been called the knowledge of Christ and which is now generally held to be limited, that is, non-omniscient, with a great variety of interpretation of the meaning of the words limited and non-omniscient. But is knowledge affected by grace? How is knowledge affected by grace? Is knowledge by grace at all, or does knowledge fall under the sphere of nature within the so-called division between nature and grace?

Before the relationship between grace and Christ's knowledge can be discussed, it is necessary to state what is here meant by this word grace. After that it must be established whether it is permissable at all to speak of Jesus Christ as living under grace. Then, perhaps, it will be possible to go on to state how Christ and grace are related.

What is grace?

Grace is not a force or energy, something automatic or which can be measured. It is a confrontation by God of His creature in which, as in the play of 'force' between any two personalities, God calls His creature towards Himself and creates that situation wherein the creature is free to respond to God's call. Thus grace is defined first in terms of redemption and of freedom, which may not be terms to be distinguished one from the other in so far as redemption is that perfect freedom which is the service of God. Freedom, in the sense in which it is taken to mean the opposite of compulsion, is there in grace in that the creature is 'free' to reject God, or better, is

enslaved as he rejects God, but is emmancipated as he freely turns to God in a new kind of slavery. However this mystery is stated, it points to the fact of God's gracious invitation to return which has been extended to the wayward in many and various ways, but in these last days through a Son.

It is also clearly a first principle of the New Testament Epistles that by this same grace which recalls the wayward power is given to the believer. Grace concerns more than the first step in salvation. There is the erroneous explanation of God's existence as first cause or prime mover, after whose original impluse, creation rolls on. This same error would be present in any explanation of grace as that which brought about re-birth and then had nothing to do with the continuing existence of the new man. At the time of re-birth, if a time is to be given to it, grace was there; it was God's gracious act of creation. As that life continues to mature God's grace continues as actively as at the re-birth. Why not proceed one step further and hold that all of life, prior to, at the time of, and forever after that re-birth is of God's grace?

If this thought is pursued it seems to lead to this. As grace is the completely free and unmerited act of God, so might creation in any form, either original creation or recreation, be held to be the gracious act of God. If creation is held to take place through God's gracious act, then <u>grace</u> has been extended to apply to all activity of God, be it in redemption, in giving man freedom, in creation, or in God's attitude toward nature. Then, all is of grace, and the highest thing a man can say about God is that He is gracious.

Christ and grace.

The Incarnation is the most gracious expression of God towards the world to whom the Son was sent. How is this Son related to the grace of God?

First, Christ is the subject of grace. In Himself He is the source of grace. "The grace of God...", "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ..." -- these are equivalent terms and are used in the New Testament in what would appear to be an interchangeable manner. As subject of grace, Jesus is the primary revelation and fulfillment of what in the Old Testament is described as God's 'loving-kindness' and 'long-suffering'. Christ is the free gift of God and the instrument of redemption. Grace comes through Christ; in Christ God spoke to the world; Christ is the reconciling Word of God. And further, if all is of grace, Christ's Being is of cosmic significance; through the grace of God revealed in Christ, all creation is given meaning and a reality is imparted to all things in such a way that there can be no docetic separation of the real from the unreal, the meaningless materiality from the 'real' spirituality. In this sense, grace is the link which makes invalid the 'great divorce' between grace and nature, spirit and matter, body and soul.....

But again there is the question of whether or not this whole vocabulary of 'cosmic significance' is gratuitously applied to the discussion of grace without sufficient reason behind it. Perhaps after all, grace is not what might be called an essential attribute of God, but is an attribute occasioned only by man's sin and therefore

is exclusively applicable to a discussion about God's relationship to sinful man and not to His relationship to creation in general, which is obviously incapable of making any personal response to Him.

This raises again the problem of whether grace has to do with all things, or only with the salvation of sinful man. This above summary definition of grace meets this problem with the rejection of that long used distinction between nature and grace as unsatisfactory in the face of the very obvious need of redemption in all areas of life's activities, a need which calls for more than a redemption of the soul at the expense of the body.

In the consideration of Jesus Christ as the subject of grace, the distinction between grace and nature, between cosmic redemption and soul salvation is not so vital, for in either case, the subject and the mediator is Christ who is the gracious act of God. It is when the discussion turns to Jesus Christ as the object of grace that the distinction really becomes vital.

Second, Christ is the object of grace.

The distinction referred to above between soul salvation and cosmic redemption is so very important here because if grace has to do with soul salvation alone it could hardly be said to apply with Jesus as its object, for He would not be in need of grace since He was no sinner in need of salvation. Perhaps one argument which avoids this dilemma and yet retains the narrow and limited definition of grace is that which states that Christ inherited sinful flesh and therefore His 'flesh' stood in need of redemption. Or it might be suggested that in entering into creation at the Incarnation He entered into a sinful world in which, while yet divine and exempt in His divinity from

the need of saving grace, in His humanity, His creatureliness, He stood in need of grace and was the object of grace. These solutions treat grace as if it were an almost impersonal force which comes into play wherever sin is present. In any event, the discussion of what kind of 'flesh' Christ assumed seems to diminish in importance as it is realized how He so fully entered into all the suffering and sorrow of a fallen world and then reacted to it uniquely. Indeed, if grace is the summation of God's relation to His world, then it leaves behind all these discussions about the nature of the 'flesh' of Christ and the distinction between His divinity and humanity, for if God is gracious, He is gracious without regard for the quality of His creature.

In D.M. Baillie's thesis of the ultimate paradox of grace Jesus appears to be considered as that man of Nazareth who as a creature of God lived as the object of God's grace, but who at the same time was more than merely 'that man of Nazareth'. He lived as God's subject and desired only to do His will, in the doing of which He was directed, supported, comforted and encouraged by the Father who graciously existed in responsive relationship with His Son. By living completely within this gracious relationship with God the Father Jesus displayed His divinity. The more He lived and attributed all to God, the more was He to be worshipped as God Incarnate. As Baillie has written, His disclaimers are Christ's highest claims.

While this paradox of grace affords an helpful approach to the understanding of the life of Jesus as a life of grace, while it is perhaps an approach from the Jesus of history to the Christ of faith which confesses that they are one person -- which is that same witness

made by the early Church when it preached Christ risen from the dead --, and while it may be but barren logomachy to approach the person of Christ differently, there are, nevertheless, questions begging to be answered as Christology puts its definition of the person of Christ in terms of the second person of the Trinity up against this idea that Christ lived under grace. One question already discussed is 'Is creation graciously sustained by God?' If it is so sustained, then the Son by entering into this creation fully incarnate would enter into a relationship of grace with the Father. Does this imply that there arose a basic change within the Trinity when the Incarnation took place? Did a new and different Father-Son relationship spring up because the Son was sent to mankind, or was the relationship between the person of the Trinity always gracious?

To answer these questions in an endeavour to analyse the relationships which take place <u>within</u> the life of the Trinity may not only be impossible but may invite either one of two errors. Either the answers are to be highly tritheistic, with a gracious relationship of response existing between three 'gods', or they are to be highly sabellian and suggest that the grace of God is expressed in the three modes of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In other words, no matter how the questions are answered -- except for the possible answer that perfect love approximates a description of the life of the Trinity -- error stands at hand. It may be suggested that the most satisfactory manner of dealing with the situation is to relegate <u>grace</u> to God's relationship with that outside of Himself, which is, after all, all that man knows of God. Perhaps this is the lowest form of argument, but

it does seem that eventually the solution to the problem becomes a mystery and — unless there is a willingness to proceed to the metaphysical questions of what was happening to the world while the Logos was incarnate, or whether the incarnation reduced the Trinity to a Binity for a period of some thirty years — it is perhaps most satisfactory to hold to the position that Jesus Himself defined the relationship between the Incarnate Son and the Father as one of grace — obedience in response, victory in prayer.

The discussion of grace in the terms of Trinity does, however, form an introduction to the relationship between grace and knowledge. If the Father-Son life is gracious, it must be eternally so. God does not change and the Father and Son never change in their relationship to each other. It is possible that only the mode of the relationship becomes transformed. In His pre-existent state the Son existed with the Father and the Holy Spirit, One God and Three Persons. In the incarnate state the relationship between the Father and Son remained unchanged; the mode of relationship was transformed into what is called gracious. In the resurrection life, unless resurrection be disincarnation, the relationship was maintained unchanged except that it is differently described as the Son sitting on the right hand of God the Father, while on earth He had shared in human limitations and saw through a glass darkly. That the response at one time is in faith (a gracious response) and at another time as face to face does not imply that the response differed essentially from time to time.

This terminology of faith and face to face introduces a

discussion of the connection between grace and knowledge as it applies to the limited knowledge of Christ and His life on earth as the object of the grace of the Father. The subject is approached with these presuppositions: grace has to do not only with 'soul salvation', but is the word which describes God's attitude and activity towards His world as a whole. There is nothing outside or beyond grace, nor is there anything arbitrarily subject to the gracious activity of God. His attitude towards the whole of creation is gracious; He has made man the mediator of that grace as He has established him overlord of the creation. Thus through man, God is graciously acting towards all of His creation. Also through man who can turn away from God's person, God is cut off in His gracious desire for the redemption of all creation — but is not cut off forever. While man 'cuts God off' and interferes with His activity, God remains long-suffering, patient, and exhibits loving-kindness. But this loving-kindness can become judgment.

As man turns towards the grace of God, as He turns towards light, so everything is light, but as he turns away from God, then he meets only darkness, and this darkness is judgment. Thus man can turn God's gracious call into judgment when he chooses 'freely' to enslave himself to himself rather than to enslave himself freely to God. Grace is thus so far-reaching in its implications that it appears like the great manifold with which God has covered all His creation.

Knowledge exists under this manifold; all knowledge is from God. But again, knowledge can exist in either light or darkness.

As the knowing person recognizes his knowledge (any kind of knowledge) to be from God and in a sense a self-expression of God -- that is, all knowledge is originally good and purposeful in God's plan -- that knowledge is in the light; as the knowing person turns away from or ignores the fact that his knowledge is from God, he turns towards darkness and the knowledge -- no longer is it real knowledge -- is corrupted so as to produce evil and become a judgment. Thus knowledge, while from God, must in man's mind be turned either towards the light or away from the light. It is not at all the degree of knowledge, or its quality, whether it is scientific, literary, theological, or 'common sense' that is important, but whether or not the person who knows has recognized his knowledge as a call from God which demands some kind of a response. There is no such thing as knowledge which is per se natural or saving knowledge. All knowledge can become saving knowledge. For example, the knowledge of the nature of energy can become saving knowledge as it is grafted into the complex of the Christian attitude towards the creation. As this grafting in takes place, the more does the particular, in the sense of a piece of knowledge, become an expression of the universal, and the man who in faith applies his knowledge expresses God's graciousness towards the whole world.

Grace has been applied above as a term describing creation as a free act of God. The gift of sight, by which the knowing person perceives that his knowledge has a place in God's plan, is a free creation by God. This creative gift of sight is evident as a principle of the Fourth Gospel where so frequently it appears that by reason of a low level of 'knowing' and 'seeing' the multitudes failed to know and see

who this Jesus was. Knowing, seeing, believing -- they are in no way concatenate. Knowledge and sight, however, can become the knowledge and vision of God when the content of the knowledge and the object of the sight are turned toward the light.

From this discussion it appears that knowledge, in so far as its particular content is concerned, possesses little value of itself. To know all things is not necessarily to be godlike; neither is to know very little necessarily a mark of an immeasurable distance between the knower and God. Knowledge is to be evaluated only by whether or not is has been, through the response of the knower to God's gracious call, turned towards the light, for knowledge illumined by God's light becomes, in a sense, the knowledge of God. The knower whose knowledge is turned towards God's light knows as God knows.

In the terms of the docetic tendency, though docetic be applied with far greater breadth than in its earliest forms, this means that 'natural knowledge' is in no way to be despised or separated from that 'spiritual knowledge' which is called 'saving knowledge'. That all knowledge does not appear as saving knowledge but much of it has yet to become saving knowledge is evidence of the fallen state of the world in which the knower must be redeemed in order that in the redemptive process his knowledge be fitted into its proper place in God's plan.

In the case of Jesus, there was an all-knowing and an all-seeing; He knew and saw perfectly; He knew and saw as God knows and sees. But this does not mean that He knew all things or saw all things. He knew God and man perfectly because the knowledge He had acquired,

the knowledge both of Holy Scripture and every day things, came through His constant and faithful response to the Father and was constantly created by the Father into the knowledge of God. All the knowledge of Jesus was turned towards the light. Other men, who have turned partially towards the light and know how much of their knowledge has yet to be redeemed, hail Jesus as divine, and they hail Him as sinless. Because He knew as man knows, and yet knew perfectly as God knows, men confess Him to be the Christ.

A point of view which must accept Jesus as either knowing all things or being limited in His humanity but omniscient in His divinity, limits the activity of God to the 'spiritual', indeed, isolates God from His world. As it does so, it perpetuates the docetic tendency. It separates the so-called non-spiritual from the light and thus paints this life, this 'natural knowledge', in the shadowy hues of unreality. This point of view must in the long run hold that only God can know God or know as God; Jesus, therefore, in order to know God and know as God must have been, in His humanity, a mere shadowy figure of unreality standing outside of God's light, but in His divinity, the very fullness of the non-incarnate God.

On the other hand, the point of view expressed in these last pages, that view which might be termed limited-omniscience in that Jesus knew as God everything He knew as man, finds no problem posed by the limitations of the knowledge of Jesus. The very term limited knowledge is problematic only as it suggests something which did not exist. As pointed out above, the knowledge of Jesus was perfect; it was unlimited as it embraced completely both God and man, spirit and matter,

eternity and time and revealed how these things became united in One who is in His perfect response to the Father completely <u>subject</u> and <u>object</u> of God's grace.

Chapter V.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST AND THE DOCETIC TENDENCY

Introduction: the bearing of the Resurrection on the problem of the tendency to docetism.

One object of the preceding chapters has been to illustrate the presence in recent British theology of the struggle to preserve the unity of the person of Christ in such a way that He appears a person and not an incomprehensible combination of human and divine 'substances'. This is a struggle to preserve, however paradoxically, the humanity and the divinity of Christ, and wherever there is either a failure to recognize the struggle or a submission to its too easy solution of emphasizing the divine nature of Christ, a docetic tendency may appear. This struggle and the temptation towards a simple solution which would stress the divinity and fail to take into consideration His completely human nature, has up to this point been analysed only as it applies to the life of Christ prior to the Resurrection. The question which now presents itself is whether or not this same struggle may be present in those works which address themselves to the subject of the Resurrection of Christ, and the purpose of this chapter is to show that certain ways of treating the Resurrection may betray an unconscious and unintentional lapse into a docetic view of Christ and the Resurrection.

If in regard to the life of Jesus of Nazareth the docetic tendency is that which disregards His truly human nature or makes it appear unreal in an over-emphasis upon the divinity, might it not be

suggested that such a tendency could appear in a theology of the Resurrection which disregarded the continuing humanity of the Risen Christ? The tendency would be manifest in any account of the Resurrection which describes the Risen Lord as existing apart from what had been His 'human nature' during His life on earth. An analysis of a theology of the Resurrection in terms of the docetic tendency might be directed by these questions: Does the theology present and preserve the identity between the person of the Incarnate Son of God who lived upon earth and the Jesus whom God raised up, who appeared to the faithful, and who ascended into heaven? Is the Resurrection described as a continuation of the Incarnation, or is it docetically described as a dis-incarnation?

This present analysis has been prepared on the assumption that the docetic tendency terminology could apply to Resurrection theologies, and that when it did apply it would be expressed in an explanation of the Resurrection which treated it as a dis-incarnation. Underlying this assumption is a particular understanding of the terms incarnation, resurrection, and docetic tendency.

The term incarnation is used in the sense of Christ not merely taking upon Himself the fleshly form of the body of this earthly life in all its material components, but taking upon Himself human nature. Resurrection has been used as a term meaning not merely the reanimation of the body of this present life, but the continuation of this life in a glorified, spiritual, reclothed body, and this as the result of a creative act of God in no way dependent upon any inherent immortality in man. The term docetic tendency is used, as it has been previously,

to describe some form of denial, perhaps unconscious and unintentional, of the human nature of Christ, and not simply a denial of the existence at one time of Christ in material form. It would be impossible to write of a docetically inclined explanation of the Resurrection of Christ if the Incarnation were to mean only that Christ assumed a material body or if docetism had to do only with the life of Christ before the Resurrection. For example, if the meaning of Incarnation were restricted to Christ's life in the flesh form birth to death, then docetism would likewise be confined to that period of His life and could not be used in connection with the Resurrection. Likewise, if docetism were a denial only of the actuality of the existence of Christ at one time in the form of man, then there is no problem in a theology of the Resurrection to which the term applies, for the Resurrection does not comment upon the nature of Christ's existence in the fleshly form of His life upon earth before His death. (This is not to say that the Resurrection is unconnected with the Life which preceded it; the Resurrection may give meaning to this Life and interpret it, but it does not describe the Life itself.) But if docetism is understood to be a denial not only of Christ's real appearance in the form of the flesh, but also a denial of the manifold expressions of Christ's humanity, then the terminology of docetism could be applied to an explanation of the Resurrection which did not take into account the continuation of His humanity, in the fullest possible meaning of the word, after the Resurrection.

The most difficult question which has occurred in connection with the preparation of this chapter is whether or not one can at all

rightly discuss the manifestations of Christ's humanity after the Resurrection except, perhaps, as a proposition logically following in the argument against docetic explanation of the Resurrection: 'Christ did not cease to be human at the Resurrection; the Incarnation continued through the Resurrection: therefore, there must be manifestations of the humanity of the Risen Lord'. Of course, there is the New Testament account of encounters between Christ and His people during the time of the Appearances in which it is recorded that He acted in a manner which expressed His human nature in situations which have to do with fleshly existence: He took food and He appeared in such a form that Thomas could have touched Him. But what of the manifestations of the continuing humanity of Christ in the Ascension and afterwards?

The source of this problem of how the humanity of the Risen Lord is manifested, a problem which puts into question the legitimacy of this chapter's study, may once again be that concept which regards the humanity and divinity of Christ as entirely separate, with each nature manifesting itself in its respective realm of activity, the humanity in the ordinary affairs of this life, the divinity in the extraordinary events of Christ's life upon earth and in His exalted and regnant life in 'heaven'. In accounts of the life of Jesus the strictly human manifestations of His person have been pointed out -- here He is acting as man --, and the strictly divine manifestations have been pointed out -- there He is acting as God. So have certain texts been allocated on the one hand to His humanity and on the other to His divinity. As such divisions are artificial and inadequate to reveal the meaning of Christ's life on earth, scarcely are they to be

expected to apply satisfactorily to His risen life. They would lead ultimately to the dualistic notion by which even the Risen Lord is expected, if He continues human and divine, to manifest Himself at times according to His strictly human nature, at other times according to His divine nature.

But if life-in-the-form-of-the-flesh in which all men share is held not to be the adequate description of the Incarnation, and if the human-divine compartmentation of Christ's being is replaced by the idea of a person at once human and divine in every expression of His incarnate being, in willing, acting, responding, obeying, then the person can be held to continue right on through any number of forms of manifestations, 'material' or 'spiritual'. However, this idea of the continuation of the person through any number of forms or manifestations raises another difficulty in which the truly Christian emphasis upon the eternal significance of this present life in the flesh and its need of total redemption is likely to be displaced by a semi-pagan and certainly sub-Christian concept in which this present form of life passes away at death when it is exchanged for a new form in which the true person, now released from the shackles of this sinful flesh, is made manifest in its freedom.

A way out of this difficulty may be suggested by the idea of paradox which, as the paradox of grace, was developed in the preceding chapter and is dependent upon its source of this interpretation of the Pauline idea upon D.M. Baillie's God Was In Christ. It has been pointed out that according to this description of Christian life in the world in terms of paradox, the Christian lives not though his own power, but

through the power given him by God, and yet at the same time through his own power in that mysterious and paradoxical side by side existence of dependence and responsibility. The individual lives, and yet not himself, but Christ in him. So in this present life he knows (in the sense of being able to relate all his empirical knowledge to the purposes of God for him) only through the faith which is created in him by God. So in this life he obeys, but only through the hope which God has created in him through the Resurrection of Christ. So in this life he loves, but only because God first loved him.

In the life of the Christian there lingers the tendency to boast that some good is from 'I' alone, but in the life of Christ there is never the assertion of self-will, independent power, or existence apart from God, no 'I' alone, but always some form of 'I, yet not I, but the Father'. In the life of Christ the idea of paradox is seen absolutely and perfectly displayed.

This paradox which so well expresses the nature of the Christian life does not suddenly disappear at death, as if it were resolved when the Christian is so 'absorbed' into God that he no longer exists as a willing self. As the idea of paradox asserts the overwhelming power of God and yet preserves the integrity of the individual life, so the paradox is sharpened and made plain when upon death God so 'reclothes' the Christian that he lives according to a power that is his own and which is God's, so that he lives according to a knowledge which is complete and faith passes away as he is confronted face to face with the source of his knowledge, so that he obeys because through resurrection God has recreated him completely free to obey. Paradoxically,

the resurrection asserts both the 'I' of the individual to a degree greater than any other act of God, an also the overwhelming power of God to a degree greater than any other act of God.

How can this idea of paradox be employed to assist in the understanding of the Resurrection as a continuation of the human and divine nature of Christ?

If the fact of the life of Christ on earth as the life of God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself is to be taken seriously, then both this Incarnation and its purpose continue, in a sense, throughout the ages. The once-for-all-ness of the Life, Death, and Resurrection must be asserted, and yet what once for all was made possible remains for each succeeding age not a static 'atonement' effected long ago, but a dynamic reconciliation constantly mediated through the continuing life of Christ, not merely through the continuing <u>effect</u> of His life upon earth mediated through the memory of each succeeding generation. It remains true that God was in Christ, and also that through Christ man is <u>presently</u> confronted by God.

Implicit in this idea of the continuing work of Christ is the distinction between God and Christ which is expressed as God-in-Christ. If the Resurrection were to be explained simply as the reduction of the dual nature of the Incarnate Christ to a nature solely divine, it would in effect be denying this distinction and would make it almost impossible to speak of the mediation of Christ, the intercession of Christ, as a function uniquely Christ's.

The Resurrection must in some way be explained so as to preserve the truth that just as God was in Christ in His life upon earth in such a way that to man's limited understanding the not-I-but-God-in-me

yet-I paradox perfectly expresses that Life, so the Risen Lord similarly knew, saw, was perfectly powerful, yet not as an absolutely autonomous subject, but because God was in Him fully and His presence in Him was not veiled by the flesh. Somehow the truth must be expressed that when the Lord was raised up, His relation to the Father could still be described in these paradoxical terms, for He entered then not so much into a glory of a new and different form, or into a new and different kind of vision and power, but when He ascended into 'heaven' He entered into a glory that was His before the Incarnation, during the Life on earth, and after the Resurrection. His Risen vision and power was the same power He knew on earth revealed no longer in weakness and suffering, but in majesty, and yet, there remained His mission of mediation which had been His upon earth and could have meaning only in relation to the Father. It was a mission and mediation in which even His Risen power and glory have meaning only relative to the Father's will. There remained after the Resurrection, in a sense, an obedience and dependence perfectly present in the continuing life of the One who, exalted by the Father, is made head over all things unto that day when all things are handed over to the Father.

This is the understanding of the person of Christ in the Resurrection which has been used to analyse some of the results of the past few years of British theology. It suffers from many limitations: The <u>first</u> is the fact that it appears to be a subordination of one person of the Trinity to another, the Son to the Father. But if this is really a subordination, it is also that 'subordination' which revealed

to men the divinity of Christ, as D.M. Baillie has pointed out when he wrote that Christ's disclaimers were His highest claims to divinity.[1] And further, if it is a subordination, it is 'subordination' within the purpose of God in which to serve is to rule. That there are functions belonging uniquely to Christ and other uniquely within the province of the Father, does not make the one lesser and the other greater, for all are a function of God. (This idea in turn has its limitations, for it appears to describe the Trinity functionally, as if the three Persons were each a 'function' of God, but it is not the intent here to press the idea to serve as a doctrine of the Trinity.) The second limitation is that the argument used previously to show how impossible it is to explain how the humanity of Jesus Christ continued to exist and manifest itself after the Resurrection and during His Heavenly Session might also be applied to paradox. It is admitted without hesitation that just how the paradox is expressed in the Risen Life, except as has been suggested above, may be beyond description without entering into the wildest speculation. It does seem valid, however, to suggest that the author who explains the Resurrection and leaves no room for the continuation of this paradox, e.g., if he leaves the dual nature of Christ in the grave, may unconsciously and without that intention betray a docetic tendency. (This is not to imply that the paradox of the Resurrection exists as tension between His humanity and divinity; it exists primarily in the relation of Jesus Christ to God.) The third limitation is this: when one writes of a glory experienced prior to, and the time of, and after the earthly life of

---

1 D.M. Baillie, God Was in Christ, page 127.

Christ, time and eternity, in so far as the definition of what belongs to time and what to eternity is concerned, are hopelessly entangled. And yet, paradoxically, in the Incarnation time and eternity are conjoined and may not be regarded as entirely separate, self-enclosed, or mutually exclusive without encountering the danger of reverting to that too sharp distinction between time and eternity, matter and spirit, nature and grace, which can lead to the docetic tendency.

I. The Person of Christ in the general discussion of the Resurrection.

The Resurrection of Christ can be discussed within several different frameworks. It can be discussed in relation to the general subject of resurrection of the dead; it can be discussed as the resurrection of the body of Christ; it can be discussed in relation to the appearances of Christ after the Resurrection; and finally, it can be discussed relative to the Ascension. Each of these discussions bears upon the Resurrection and illumines it; no one exhausts the meaning of the Resurrection; each one is an arena in which the struggle with the docetic tendency takes place. Each discussion is valid only so long as it speaks of the Resurrection in terms of the saving activity of God.

a. A priori considerations in the discussion of the Resurrection which may invite a tendency to docetism.

It must be maintained that the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead was an act of God of unique importance among the other events in the

long salvation history. It is within this context that the paradoxical existence together of an all powerful act of God and a response by His creature can be maintained, and this side by side existence is as true in the life of Jesus as in the life of any other man. When the discussion of the Resurrection begins to include other reasons for the occurrence of the Resurrection and explains it in terms of something outside this salvation history it moves away from this context of act and response, which is but another manner of putting the paradox present in the I-yet-not-I-but-Christ-in-me confession, and usually falls into one of two errors, each of which may lead ultimately to a docetic attitude towards the Ressurection. One of these errors is to base an 'explanation' of the Resurrection upon the assumption of man's inherent immortality. To do so would be to engage in a docetic point of view towards the Resurrection, for it would deny not only the value of the unique quality of the life of Jesus which preceded the Resurrection -- He was One who could not be held by the pangs of death because of all that He was through obedience and response in suffering and temptation -- but it would also deny the creative act of God in the Resurrection. Were the Resurrection to be described in terms of inherent immortality, it would be <u>determined</u> by this immortality and lose every moral quality, which loss, broadly speaking, lies at the root of docetism.

Although the Resurrection is not described in recent British theology in terms of the inherent immortality of man there are indications of the presence of the point of view that while immortality is not by nature in every man, it was in the person of Jesus, the perfect man and end for which mankind is destined. E.G. Selwyn, for example, writes:

"We do not know what are the potentialities of matter when indwelt by the soul of the Son of God..." The material out of which the body of Jesus was formed saw no corruption because it was inhabited by the soul of the Son of God, and "..in embodying the manhood of God Incarnate, the whole course of physical evolution reached its highest destiny, and through the conquest of death passed over into forms of energy as yet unguessed".[1]

This is on the one hand to treat the Resurrection of Jesus as something dependent upon the inhabitation of matter by the divine soul of the Son and on the other hand to make the resurrection of the Christian dependent upon an evolutionary process which in Jesus reached its highest destiny. In so far as this treatment of resurrection tends to make it depend upon the divine nature of the Person of Jesus, which is the thought conveyed by Selwyn's argument that Jesus rose from the grave because of the indwelling "by the soul of the Son of God", and tends to overlook the fact of resurrection as a free creative act of God which occurs anew time and again in the Christian community, it shares in that deterministic quality which is the forerunner of the docetic tendency. What this amounts to is that the explanation of the Resurrection both of Christ and the Christian is based upon the fact of Christ's inner divine nature.

This and similar concepts of the Resurrection build up an argument in which Christ is bound to have risen from the dead through either His own unique nature as divine or through the nature of mankind who in Him achieved the end of its evolutionary development. This is to

---

[1] E.G. Selwyn, "The Resurrection", Essays Catholic and Critical, 3rd Ed., 1929, page 319.

explain the Resurrection as substantially determined -- because of this and that property, be it the nature of creation at its highest state of development or the divine nature of the person of Christ, the Resurrection was absolutely certain to take place. But this is the same kind of argument which holds that solely because Jesus was divine, he could not sin, because He was divine He could work miracles, because He was divine He had unlimited knowledge. It omits entirely both the quality of the Life which preceded the Resurrection and the free and creative activity of God in the Resurrection.

b. <u>The element of paradox in the discussion of the Resurrection and its relation to the docetic tendency</u>.

There is that element in resurrection thought which points towards its having a basis neither in the nature of 'evolved' man, nor solely in the nature of Christ, but in the nature of God, and this not in the sense that resurrection is 'God's business', but in the sense of the Resurrection revealing something of the nature of God which had never before been known. God was in Christ, but Jesus was not recognized fully as come from God, much less as being the very Son of God, until the Resurrection revealed something more of God's nature which was not visible to sinful men in the life of Jesus before His death. The Resurrection in this sense is actually understood as a work of God outside of Christ. The utterance of Peter at Jerusalem to the gathered throngs of men of Israel seems to indicate something of the early presence of this thought: "...this Jesus, delivered up according to the

definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. But God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it."[1]

This passage represents the Resurrection as a work entirely of God and at the same time something which was not possible but for the very nature of the person whom God did raise up, One whom the pangs of death could not imprison. The continuation of the individuality of Jesus is here preserved in the same terms as the not-I-but-Christ-in-me paradox. It was not Christ who raised Himself up; it was God in Him. And yet the Resurrection was true and effective only because of what Christ was Himself and the quality of the life He had lived.

In this paradoxical explanation of the Resurrection as completely dependent both upon the life of Jesus Christ before His death and upon the free, creative, and undetermined act of God, it is necessary to keep the two elements in balance, for were the Resurrection treated solely as an act of God apart from the life of Christ which preceded it, it would be an explanation of the same deterministic nature as that which describes the miracles of Jesus solely in terms of His divine nature. James Orr writes that Christ's personality and His claims demanded the Resurrection as "a retrospective attestation that Jesus was indeed the exalted and divinely-sent person He claimed to be".[2] In this sense, the Resurrection is that historical event which fulfills and makes adequate the "spiritual faith that roots itself in Christ's unbroken communion with the Father".[3] This phrase, "unbroken communion

1 Acts 2:23, 24. (R.S.V.)
2 James Orr, The Resurrection of Jesus, 1908, pages 270-271.
3 Ibid., pages 273-274.

with the Father" calls to attention the obedient, responsive life of Christ which led Him to the Cross and it explains the Resurrection as "the complement of victorious death", an event bound to have happened because of the very nature of the death in obedience to the Father's will.[1] This explanation in terms of the preceding life of Christ must be preserved, or else the Resurrection becomes a divine fiat. Dependent solely upon the free, creative act of God; dependent solely upon the Life of Christ -- paradoxically, these must exist together in order to preserve the truth expressed through the Resurrection.

However, as it is possible to go too far in emphasizing the Resurrection solely as an act of God, so is it possible to over-emphasize the Resurrection as dependent upon the quality of the Life which preceded it. For example, S.D.F. Salmond, where he is considering the subject of man's immortality and the life after death, writes: "...man's immortality is determined by the spiritual attitude to which he commits himself here". He writes of the "finality of life's spiritual decisions", of the "magnitude of the moral issues of the present existence", and concludes that it is not "what God imposes on us in the other life, but what we take with us into it" that is the determining factor. He writes: "We carry ourselves into it."[2]

This argument seems to over-emphasize the truth that this life with its many choices and decisions to be made is a vital factor to be considered in a theology of the resurrection and to leave out the truth

---

1 A.D. Nock, "A note on the Resurrection", Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation, A.E.J. Rawlinson, ed., 1933, page 48.

2 S.D.F. Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, 1903, pages 526ff.

that resurrection is all of God. This argument avoids the paradox of resurrection and in so doing makes it appear to be an event predetermined by man's immortality, which in turn is determined by the nature of man's life in this world.

It should be pointed out that this tendency in Salmond to explain resurrection and immortality in terms of present moral choice does not exclude from his argument the factor of the grace of God. He writes: "The future will be an existence in which we shall go on and grow on either in knowledge, love, and power of service, or in their opposites. This is the determinism by moral choice. But if so, the decisive matter is the trend of life with which we enter that future. The mercy of God extends to the last hour of life. The grace of God may be efficacious with many as it was with the robber on the cross."[1] The factor of God's sole activity enters in to counteract the determinism and the paradox which has been pointed out begins to appear in Salmond's own treatment of the life after death.

The life of Jesus, perfect in its every choice and decision, may seem to conclude in a resurrection and display of immortality which is the result either of 'that trend of life' with which He entered the future, or the result of His divine nature. And yet, the meaning of the Resurrection is weakened when it is explained either as the understandable and expected end of a perfect human life, or the necessary end of a divine life, as it is in W.F. Cobb's discussion of the Resurrection.

---

[1] Ibid., page 523.

In summary, Cobb's position leads to this. The Resurrection of Christ, and of Christians, is the result of the participation in a higher life -- the way of the Cross and regeneration. This higher life in Christ was the result of His uniting indissolubly the divine to the human nature in Himself "as its preservative and quickening power". But to express the nature of the person of Christ in terms of a union of divine and human in which the former preserves and quickens the latter is to vitiate Cobb's further arguments about immortality and resurrection as gifts from God. While on one hand Cobb places Christ and the Christian together on the dependent and obedient way of the Cross in which the Resurrection and immortality are gifts, on the other hand he describes immortality as independent of God but dependent upon the constitution of the divine-human person for whom immortality, by reason of His 'substantial' constitution, is implicit in what He is.[1]

The truth that the Resurrection of Jesus is solely the mighty act of God must also be maintained and emphasized. J.S. Whale reflects this New Testament sentiment when he writes: "to say that God revealed himself in Jesus, or that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, is to say nothing of real meaning unless we take our stand with the New Testament at one decisive point. That point is where God manifests Jesus as the Son of God with power, by the Resurrection from the dead."[2] A similar argument which preserves the element of paradox in the discussion of the Resurrection is that of W.J.S. Simpson where

---

[1] W.F. Cobb, Mysticism and the Creed, 1914, pages 232-240.

[2] J.S. Whale, Christian Doctrine, 1950, pages 68-69.

he presents the Resurrection both as that free, creative, novel work of the Father in the Son, and at the same time the necessary result of the very nature of the Son's lifelong response to the Father in which this Resurrection-Exaltation is at once a constitutive event to a greater power and a continuation of that same power which through the Resurrection was seen to have been present all through Christ's life.[1]

The argument in terms of paradox leads the Resurrection discussion away from the framework provided by either the 'divine nature of the person of Christ' or the 'inherent immortality of man' or the 'eternal significance of this life' and places it in that context of response and grace which has in previous chapters been suggested as a safeguard against Christological discussion relying so heavily upon substantial and deterministic concepts which can so easily become the medium of the docetic tendency.

II. The Resurrection Body: A factor in the identification of the Crucified with the Risen Christ.

The concept of a Resurrection Body may be an aid to the expression of a non-docetic continuation of the Incarnation in the person of Christ at the Resurrection; the concept also has limitations which may cause it to contribute to the docetic factor in the discussion of the Resurrection. The purpose of this section is to illustrate some

---

[1] W.J.S. Simpson, The Resurrection and Modern Thought, 1911, pages 256, 286-288, 293, 302.

of the positive contributions and also the limitations of the concept of a Resurrection Body in the struggle with the docetic tendency.

The first difficulty immediately present to the study of the Resurrection Body of Christ in relation to the docetic tendency and as an expression of the identity between Jesus of Nazareth and the Risen Lord is that theologians are unable adequately to discuss the nature of the Resurrection Body. Leonard Hodgson writes that disputes about the Resurrection are carried on largely between Christians and usually take the form of an argument centred about the distinction between a 'bodily' and a 'spiritual' Resurrection. Hodgson indicates that he can perceive no difference between 'spiritual body' and 'spiritual resurrection', and this because man's ignorance is almost as complete as it can be when it comes to the analysis of the three factors that would make the meaning of resurrection clear to knowledge. These factors are: "(a) an analysis of "physical body" in terms of its constituent elements; (b) an analysis of "spiritual body" in terms of its constituent elements; and (c) an understanding of the relation between these so that we can grasp the process of the transformation of the physical into the spiritual and the subsequent manifestation of the spiritual in the physical or quasi-physical form".[1]

This inability to describe adequately the relationship of physical and spiritual as the terms apply to 'body' might lead to the argument that since the idea of 'body' as an expression of identity cannot be analysed, it therefore can play no part in the discussion of the continuing 'humanity' of the Risen Christ. A.E. Garvie reflects

1 L. Hodgson, And Was Made Man, 1933, page 125.

this attitude in his remarks on the body as not constituting in itself the key to identity: "All the absurdities about the identity of the body laid in the grave and the body raised, for which the literalism of orthodoxy is responsible, fall aside in such a view, the functional view of body as the organ of spirit , and can even be brushed aside as utterly unscriptural, as what Paul insists on is the contrast between the natural and the spiritual body".[1]

The second difficulty to be met in this study of the Resurrection Body as a factor which contributes to the identity of the person of Jesus as He existed before the Resurrection and the person of Jesus as He existed after the Resurrection is that tension which some hold to exist between what is meant by Resurrection Body in the Epistles of St. Paul and what is meant by it in the Gospels. This so-called tension is a specific instance of the attitude that there is a 'tension' between the physical and the spiritual. Thus this second difficulty, unlike the first which was one primarily of ignorance about something, arises from that point of view about the very nature of things in which there is a so-called essential difference, tension, and conflict between what is physical and what is spiritual. Were this point of view consistently applied, it would not be possible to express identity and continuity through spiritual Resurrection in terms of the body, for the spiritual body and physical body, according to this view, are so essentially different that a continuity or identity could exist only from physical body to physical body, as it does in the natural changes constantly taking place within the body of this present life which nevertheless

---

1 A.E. Garvie, Handbook of Apologetics, 1913, page 217.

remains the same body.

This second difficulty is variously present. For example, J. Mackinnon has for the basis of his discussion of resurrection the hypothesis that 'spiritual' and 'bodily' are terms separate and distinct in the sense of being mutually exclusive. He traces the idea of resurrection historically and holds that Jesus taught a 'spiritual' resurrection according to the Pharisaic doctrine. He writes of body as something peculiar only to this earthly existence, as something not subject to resurrection, and at one place concludes: "The tomb of Jesus could, therefore, on this reasoning, not have been empty."[1] This reasoning is the logical result of a dualistic concept, primarily substantial, based on the understanding of the 'inner nature' of the 'physical' and 'spiritual' as excluding each other.[2]

Although these difficulties arise when the body is treated as a thing in itself and completely distinct from spirit, they do not prevent the study of the Resurrection Body as an element in the identity and continuity of the Person of Christ before and after the Resurrection. The Resurrection Body exists neither as a thing in itself to be contemplated in isolation and whose meaning is exhausted in relation to itself, nor as something totally distinct from the body of the life this

---

1 J Mackinnon, The Historic Jesus, 1931, pages 283-285.

2 The consistency of Mackinnon's interpretation of St. Paul's teaching in First Corinthians that the Resurrection "is undoubtedly spiritually conceived, Jesus is raised in a spiritual body", might be questioned, for if spiritual and bodily are so very distinct, and if the Resurrection of Jesus is spiritual and not bodily, then is it consistent to use such a term as 'spiritual body'. This may, however, be no more than another example of the almost unavoidable confusion in the use of the words body, bodily, spiritual.

side of the grave. The Resurrection Body is not merely the human appendage which accompanied the divine Spirit of Christ at His Resurrection, but it exists within the total context of the work of God in Christ. The Resurrection Body can be described functionally in relation to spirit, as the organ of the spirit, and it can be described functionally in relation to the continuing work of Christ which He began in the body at the Nativity. When body is considered functionally and in relation to the work of Christ, the study of the Resurrection Body need become involved neither in the spiritual-physical 'conflict', nor in the problems created by lack of knowledge concerning the nature of the Resurrection Body. Nevertheless, this ubitquitous spiritual-physical conflict continues to appear even among those theologians who adopt this functional approach, and where this so-called tension, a relic of pagan dualism, is present, so is there likely to accompany it a tendency toward some form of docetic view of the Resurrection.

a. The body as functional in relation to spirit.

According to one expression of this functional view, the body is the functioning instrument of the spirit, or the organ of the spirit, and so is the constantly present element by which the person is expressed. Body in this sense is not confined to 'flesh and bones', but is determined in its nature by the environment in which the person is to be expressed. According to this view any identity existing between the body in one environment and the body in another rests entirely upon the functional character of the body in relation to spirit in each case.

The nature of the body with its varying characteristics and properties in different environments is not the identifying principle.

In the writing of certain authors, this type of functional interpretation is held to apply to the Pauline concept of body, while the simple identity of body with body, such as identity of nature, is held to be the idea found in the Gospel's presentation of the Resurrection Body. By one argument or another the 'tension' between St. Paul's idea of the body and that of the Gospels is justified or explained. For example, the simple and forthright statement of identity as it appears in the Gospels is held to have been elaborated in St. Paul's writing where a deeper meaning is given to identity, a meaning which goes beyond the simple identity of the body prior to the Death with that of the Resurrection: "...St. Paul expected some change in the human body at its resurrection which cannot unfairly be described as a transubstantiation, in the sense that he expected it to consist no longer of flesh and blood, but at the same time did not expect that this result would be obtained by the spirit taking to itself another body, and leaving behind the old material body...It is perhpas true, that it is more certain that St. Paul looked for a change in the attributes and properties of the body than that he regarded this change as absorbing, if the phrase may be used, the whole of the mortal body without leaving any remains..."[1] Thus the Resurrection marked the occasion when a change in the nature of the body occurred, and in this changed nature, the body of Jesus appeared to the Apostles. The

1 K. Lake, The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, 1907, pages 22-23.

Resurrection produced not a new and different body; the same body continued with new attributes and properties. There also seems to be the implication that in the grave may have been left a form which complied with the old properties note entirely 'absorbed'.

Identity expressed in this way is an identity of function and that is all that can be said for it. Body will accompany spirit as its functioning instrument, but the properties of the body will not be constant; the body will be completely dependent upon spirit, but the spirit will in no way depend upon or be affected by the body.

The difficulty which arises when identity is so expressed is present in a statement by A.E. Garvie: "...human personality may in a future life possess the necessary organ of action and communication, of a quality which will make it a perfect servant. In contrast to this natural it is possible to conceive in this sense a spiritual body...the Christian hope is that a complete personality will be ours in the future life."[1]

Garvie apparently takes Lake's argument one step further and goes beyond the idea of identity of body continuing through a change of properties to a new body entirely distinct from the old. Identity so expressed is confined to identity of spirit; there is no identity of body.

Another form of this same argument appears where J. Mackinnon develops the thought that identity and continuity before and after death are dependent upon spirit, which is used to signify "the immaterial and

---

[1] A.E. Garvie, Handbook of Apologetics, page 217.

immortal permanence of personality".[1] This position is developed as Mackinnon compares the witness of St. Paul to the Resurrection with that of the Gospels and concludes that although the evidence of the empty tomb and the bodily resurrection may be questioned, it is yet possible on good grounds to accept the spiritual resurrection as conclusive. In this conclusion he does not question the reality of the appearance of Christ after the Resurrection, but he is lead to an explanation of them which conforms to the general 'spiritualizing' tendency in his interpretation of the Resurrection. He accepts St. Paul's testimony and holds it to be "reasonably certain" that the disciples had these experiences, which are "all the more credible inasmuch as Paul does not ground them on legendary phenomena, but simply contents himself with attesting their reality".[2] Appearances and reality are used to describe a situation in which the disciples were in sympathy with Jesus and aspired after Him. According to Mackinnon these were the two conditions necessary for this spiritual atmosphere to which the appearances belong.

The value of this view of body as the organ of the spirit is that it avoids the grossly material concept of resurrection as simply the reanimation of the body of death a view which would leave out the creative activity of God in resurrection miraculously exalting and transforming the individual. This view of body as organ of the spirit is capable of taking into account the exaltation of Christ in His Resurrection and Ascension in which the Risen Christ is not simply the reanimated Crucified Jesus, but the Lord in a new way, constituted with power.

---

1 J. Mackinnon, The Historic Jesus, page 285.
2 Ibid., pages 295-300.

And yet, this Risen One is the same person as Him who dies, a truth easily overlooked when the body is considered merely as the organ of the spirit.

A limitation to this view of body as organ of spirit is the ease with which it can avoid the problems of the interactive relationship between body and spirit. It could be argued that if the body is the organ of the spirit, then the control of the body is with the spirit, but this argument would be lacking that element of mutual influence of body upon spirit, spirit upon body, which is a true part of human nature. Thus this functional view of body may suffer on occasion from not fully expressing the importance of body, and, in connection with the struggle with the docetic tendency, may tend to place too great an emphasis upon spirit, emphasizing, as it were, the divinity at the expense of the humanity, although the word body does not exhaust the meaning of humanity any more than spirit contains all that is meant by divinity. It remains true that humanity is not all spirit, and somehow that paradoxical relationship of body as a thing in itself to spirit as a thing in itself must be preserved.

The difficulty with the functional view of the body as the organ of the spirit is, perhaps, not so much in its attitude toward the future life as in its results in retrospect upon the life of Christ upon earth, for in this atmosphere of spiritualization it is possible that the body of the life on earth will be treated simply as the organ of the spirit, and the next step is to hold that the humanity of Jesus was simply the organ for the expression of His divinity.

B.H. Streeter and W.J.S. Simpson share a view in which body is again considered to be an organ of the spirit (the soul or 'life principle') and is specifically determined in form not only by the environment in which it must function but also by choices made in the past.

It is Streeter's contention that Jesus was opposed to the idea of a shadowy underworld and affirmed a resurrection which would be a life of value, but not gross or material, as for example, a participation in an earthly Messianic reign. St. Paul, according to Streeter, was able to work out a concept of resurrection which lay midway between the materialism of the apocalyptic literature and the Greek idea of immortality. His position is summed up in this statement: "To our Lord, then, and to St. Paul, the real meaning and value of the idea of the resurrection of the body does not consist in an affirmation of a material and flesh and blood existence in the future -- that they both repudiate. It stands mainly for two things, that the life of the future will be richer not poorer than this life, and that individuality, personal distinctions, and the results of the moral and emotional as well as of the intellectual activities of this life will be preserved in the next. More than that, it means that the capacity for such activity will still endure."[1]

The form of this future life is to be determined by the same "life principle" present in this life. This "life principle" is an inherent power of "determining form and building up by assimilation

---

1 B.H. Streeter, "The Resurrection of the Dead", Immortality, 1917, page 95.

from its environment a new body suited to that environment whether that environment be in this world or in the world beyond our sight", and environment includes judgments made as well as physical surroundings. Streeter writes: "If Judgment means discrimination between good and evil, it is automatically proceeding all the while; the Last Day will not be something new and added, it will merely be the revelation of a fait accompli. But it will be a revelation entailing some startling and tremendous consequences...The body will be fair or foul, strong or weak, according as would best express the character of the person it serves."[1]

Although this explanation of resurrection and the future life may contain that which is incomprehensible when it speaks of the resurrection body in terms of a future environment about which nothing is known, it adds to the explanation of 'resurrection body' the moral quality of the influence of choice in this life on the body of the next and so helps to preserve the paradox in which the resurrection body appears both a new creation from God and at the same time is an expression of the continuation of the whole individual self which wholeness must contain the element of previous choice and judgment.

The direction of this argument is away from the tendency to describe body and spirit as if there were in any way in opposition to each other, or even as separate and distinct from one another as a subject, spirit, and its object, body. The argument employs terms which are capable of including the element of response and choice, which is a true and necessary element in the preservation of the I-yet-not-I-but

---

1 Ibid., pages 11, 125-126.

-Christ-in-me paradox as it applies to resurrection.

W.J.S. Simpson follows Streeter in his description of body as the organ of spirit which is determined in form by its environment. He adds to this argument an element which introduces the next section of the chapter, that is, the Resurrection Body in its relation to the Work of Christ. He writes against the emphasis upon the gross materiality and physical-ness of the Resurrection Body as an expression of the continuity of Christ's person, and in its place suggests the idea of a material Resurrection, but not material in the sense of flesh and bones, and yet a body derived substantially from the body which dies. He writes that Jesus in His glorified human body, in condescension and adaptation to their needs, assumed the form in which He appeared to the disciples. Thus the Appearances and the Resurrection Body take their significance as evidential and purposeful, not as if they occurred in a form uncommon to a spiritual body but common only to a material body, not as if they occurred in a second body which was briefly entered into and then discarded, but as the appearances of the same person, the same body, that had been crucified and had been raised up and glorified.

This concept of "solid frame and flesh and bones as temporarily existing in the Resurrection-Body for evidential purposes" would seem theatrical and deceptive were it not for the fact that Simpson stresses so strongly that it is not a spiritual body which by reason of its divine prerogatives takes on a guise, a second body, but is the very material body of Christ which, if the disciples were to apprehend the significance of the Resurrection as an attestation of the Life which preceded it,

had to appear in the form in which it did appear.[1]

b. The Resurrection Body in relation to the work of God in Christ: the Appearances.

W.J.S. Simpson has provided the introduction to this section by pointing out the purposive significance of the Resurrection-Body of Christ. To so explain the Body of Christ at the Resurrection and the Appearances in such a purposive context as the work of God in Christ is to express the identity of the body before resurrection with that after resurrection in terms of the continuing work of Christ and so avoid the dangers of turning the study of Christian doctrine of life after death "from an imperative task to a leisurely theme" in which abounds speculation about the future environment and the nature of the body in that environment. The discussion of immortality, the resurrection body, and the continuing life, when it attempts to analyse this life in terms of substances and natures passes from "a practical task to be but a theoretical problem, from a Gospel to our will to be a riddle to our wits".[2]

Leonard Hodgson, who affirms the idea of the body as a "means of self-expression appropriate to the sphere in which activity is to be exercised" and warns that men have no knowledge of the nature of a spiritual body nor how the Lord appeared to the disciples, urges that the Resurrection, with the Empty Tomb and the amazing events included

1 W.J.S. Simpson, The Resurrection and Modern Thought, pages 315, 410ff, 416-418, 421, 423.
2 P.T. Forsyth, This Life and the Next, 1918, page 57.

in the Appearances, be considered as the necessary manner in which the purposes of God could be fulfilled in Christ. These events cannot be analysed satisfactorily through a study of the nature of the new body of the resurrection, but, Hodgson asserts, they can be treated in the same way as the Virgin Birth: "...whatever was the mode of His birth and of His resurrection, it was a necessary mode. Only in that way could God become incarnate, and incarnate God rise from the Dead".[1] The Virgin Birth and the Resurrection signify mighty acts of God without which the New Testament could not have been written: "...the Gospels are records written after the Resurrection by men who just because of their faith in the Resurrection believed in the godhead of their Lord..."[2]

There are two ways of expressing the purposiveness of the post-Resurrection appearances of Christ. One is to consider them as a retrospective attestation, as do L. Hodgson and F.D.V. Narborough, who writes: "...whatever the nature of the appearances of the risen Lord, the conviction of their reality confirmed the disciples in their acceptance of His Messiahship and of His doctrine of God, and gave the impetus to the development in due time of their implications".[3]

Another way of expressing this purposiveness of the Resurrection is to consider it not only as retrospective attestation, but as having

---

1 L. Hodgson, And Was Made Man, page 129-130, Hodgson places the emphasis upon the purpose of God's acts, which is known; the inner nature of those acts is not known, and, therefore, the affirmation of implications such as 'If Christ arose from the dead, His tomb must have been empty' cannot be insisted upon. He writes: "... if a man were to believe that Jesus Christ was indeed God incarnate, though he thought of Him as born of two parents into His human life, and of His body as seeing corruption in the tomb, I do not see how he could rightly be denied the name of a Christian or a membership in the Christian Church." Page 130.

2 Ibid., page 2.

3 F.D.V. Narborough, "The Christ", Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation, 1933, page 25.

in itself a value as the work of God in Christ. James Orr takes this position and in his statement of the doctrinal bearing of the Resurrection makes it plain that as the retrospective attestation and present work of God in Christ, the Resurrection is at the very centre of the Christian faith, the "constitutive part of the Christian Gospel", so much so that a denial or removal of the Resurrection as a constitutive element would mutilate the Christian doctrine of Redemption. Orr writes: "It might almost be said to be a test of the adequacy of the view of Christ and His work taken by any school, whether it is able to take in the Resurrection of Christ as a constitutive part of it".[1] Thus the Resurrection has meaning both as a retrospective attestation of His Person and as a present part of His Work.

In connection with Christ's own work, Orr regards the Resurrection as the completion of the Redemption which could not have been effective had He remained in the grave, as a public declaration of the Father's acceptance of the redeeming work, and as Christ's entrance into a new life with God to become "the principle of spiritual quickening to His people".[2] As a continuation of Christ's redeeming work the resurrection sheds light on the redemptive nature of that work: "... it gives its due place to the body of man in the constitution of his total personality". If man is to be redeemed, it is all of man, man neither wholly spiritual nor wholly natural.

---

1 J. Orr, The Resurrection of Jesus, pages 270-275.
2 Ibid., page 280.

The purposiveness of the appearances of Jesus after the Resurrection is reflected in their 'vocational' nature. It is this vocational explanation of the appearances that helps to prevent the study of them from becoming a pseudo-scientific analysis of the nature of the spiritual body and makes possible the integration of the Resurrection with the rest of religious life.[1] The vocational explanation applies to the work Christ was doing in the Resurrection when, as "a living person who exists in the fullness of human nature behind the veil of sense", and as one who is "actively engaged in the shaping of events and the salvation of men" He issued a call or command or gave a vocation to those to whom He appeared.[2]

The value of this discussion of the body in terms of the work of Christ to the struggle with the docetic tendency lies in the manner in which it gives very full value and meaning to the body and avoids describing it either as a human appendage of the raised spirit or a guise assumed by the spirit in some form of a docetic 'reincarnation' after death. To describe the Resurrection Body in terms of the Work is to avoid speculating upon it as the residue of Christ's humanity -- which is a docetic manner of thinking in so far as it separates Christ's person into the divine and human compartments with the divine the only one remaining after death with any real significance to the Person of Christ -- and to avoid relegating the body to mere 'organ' in such a way that the spirit remains, as before death, the non-incarnate controlling factor in the Person of Christ. To describe the Resurrection Body in

---

1 E.G. Selwyn, "The Resurrection", Essays Catholic and Critical, 3rd Ed., 1929, pages 305-317.

2 W.F. Cobb, Mysticism and the Creed, pages 244-246.

terms of the Work is to express it without solving the problems of the 'nature' of that Body, but it is also to preserve the paradox in the Resurrection by which it is both retrospective attestation and new creation, both the work of Christ Himself and dependent upon His Life and at the same time the work of God in Christ.

III. The Ascension: deterministic conceptions which tend towards docetism and an introduction to the paradox of the relation of God to His Community.

Of several means by which the Resurrection theologies find in the Ascension an expression of the identity between the Risen and Crucified Christ, one is to consider the Ascension as the historical event in which Christ, before the eyes of those Apostles watching Him, was taken up into 'heaven'. This may be the most satisfactory explanation in terms of identity and continuity, for it regards the event which is described according to the cosmogony of that day as the climax of one part of Christ's work and the beginning again of His work in a new way.[1] According to this view of the Ascension, the mystery of the event remains a mystery and there is avoided both the speculation of the 'new theology' and the impossible attempts at scientific explanation in terms of unknown dimensions.[2] To explain the Ascension as a transition of the work of Christ from one sphere to another -- He ascended to the

1 A.C. Headlam, Christian Theology, 1934, pages 296ff.

2 R.J. Campbell, The New Theology, 1907, pages 220ff. Campbell writes of the Appearances: "Here, then, we have a being whose consciousness belongs to the fourth-dimensional plane adjusting Himself to the capacity of those on a three-dimensional plane for the sake of proving to them beyond dispute that -- "Life is lord of death, and love can never lose its own.""

position of power and authority at the right hand of God the Father, with the emphasis not so much on the locus as upon the function -- makes it possible to include the 'whole' person of Christ in this event and to relate the activities of His life upon earth with those of His life in 'heaven'. So understood, the Ascension becomes the link which binds together and the bridge which joins as one the physical and the spiritual; it reveals the wholeness of life which includes both physical and spiritual, divine and human, in close interacting relation to each other.

Another explanation of the Ascension is that it was an attestation of Christ's divinity and a revelation of the continuation of that divine nature which had pre-existed throughout all time in the person of Christ. An example of this tendency appears where H.B. Swete expresses this continuity of the divinity of Christ in terms of memory. He describes the Ascension as "the momentary act of will by which He finally left the world, and went to the Father". The life to which He went was, however, not altogether new to Jesus, for "in the depth of His divine consciousness the Son of Man had memories of the glory which in His pre-incarnate life he had had with the Father before the world was". The novelty of the event existed solely for the humanity of Christ, the only area in which there was not a continuity of memory from pre-existent being: "But the human soul of Christ up to the moment of the Ascension had had no experience of the full Vision of God which burst upon it when He was taken up." This vision was the goal of His human life; it was achieved at the moment of Ascension. The "Sacred Humanity" did retain all that was necessary to human nature, but it was a humanity in

which the "Flesh of the World" at the Resurrection had been placed so fully under control of the Spirit that the body became independent of the laws that govern matter.[1] Again in this explanation of Ascension is an example of that sharp separation of spirit from matter, the spiritual from the physical, which when applied to the Ascension, results in a continuity that is dependent wholly upon the "Divine Consciousness" in which was preserved a memory of a pre-existent state and gives little place to that quality of the 'human' life which was lived in obedience and dependence upon the Father. In effect, the Ascension is the pre-determined result of the 'divinity' which continued apart from the humanity as the controlling factor in the life of Christ.

This argument by H.B. Swete is deterministic in that it explains the Ascension on the a priori assumption of the 'divinity' of Christ in a way that tends to isolate the divinity from the humanity, as Swete uses the terms, and so suggests the possibility of a docetic tendency. There are other arguments, however, equally deterministic, which account for the Ascension not in terms of the 'divine nature', but in terms of those properties of the body of Christ which were unlike those of an ordinary human body. James Orr suggests that "even during His earthly ministry, Christ's body possessed powers and obeyed laws higher than those to which ordinary humanity is subject".[2]

---

1 H.B. Swete, The Ascended Christ, 1910, pages 9-10.
2 James Orr, The Resurrection of Jesus, page 201. He cites for support of this argument Matt. 14:22-23; Mark 6:45-52; John 6:15-21.)

Orr describes the Ascension as "an extension of the same supernatural quality when the power is attributed to Jesus of withdrawing Himself from sensible perception altogether", as it was attributed to Him at Emmaus and on other occasions when He appeared and disappeared. The climax of this supernatural quality came when Jesus in the Ascension account is "represented as withdrawing Himself wholly from conditions of space and time, and as transcending physical limitations".[1]

This is to describe the Ascension in terms of natural and supernatural law and suffers from the same defects as that explanation of the miraculous in the life of Jesus in terms of natural and supernatural law which are pointed out in Chapter II of this thesis. However, the Ascension may be likened unto the miracles which took place in the life of Jesus when those miracles are understood to be creative revelations of the amazing proximity of the spiritual and physical in the 'real' world of faith, and of the inseparable existence together of the divine and the human, the spiritual and material, any denial of which is to cut God off from His world and make Him subject to the 'laws' of nature and other barriers set up at the so-called frontier between the physical and spiritual worlds or the natural and supernatural orders. The Ascension takes its place among miracles as the further revelation to the Apostles of this relationship between the physical and spiritual. This revelation was received with that expectancy which was fulfilled at Pentecost when the relationship between the physical and the spiritual was again manifested in that the Ascension was fulfilled in that power set loose among the Community of Christ.

---

1 Ibid., pages 199-200.

Just as the paradoxical explanation of the Resurrection as an event solely the result of the free act of God the Father and as an event explainable solely in terms of the Person and Life of God the Son helps to avoid the deterministic element present whenever an explanation over-emphasizes either the power of God the Father or the preceding Life of God the Son, so it may prove helpful to point out the element of paradox in the Ascension. The fact of the Ascension as the freely creative act of God the Father, i.e., Jesus was taken up into 'heaven', and also the fact of the nature of the Life of the Son of God in His human and divine nature, must be held together with each, paradoxically, the sole cause of the Ascension.

The bearing of the Ascension and Pentecost upon one another introduces a further factor into the paradox of the Faith, that of the Christian Community which is not only a witness to the fact of the continuing presence of Christ, but is the result of His continuing presence -- like miracle, the Community is both a sign pointing to the presence of Christ and an event significant in itself as the power of Christ presently at work. Without the continuing presence of the Community or Fellowship of the Spirit, the Ascension and its fulfillment at Pentecost, and indeed the Resurrection and Life of Jesus upon earth, would have no meaning other than the suddenly begun and suddenly ended incursion of the divine into human, the spiritual into the material, the supernatural into the natural. This idea of incursion and exit of the divine over-emphasizes the truth that God is Lord of His creation, and not only suggests that His Lordship is like that of the arbitrary dictator, but that His creatures have no individual significance, except, perhaps, as anarchists in constant rebellion. In the face of what

wrongly amounts to the constant struggle between matter and spirit, the world and God, into which God enters only by so-called fiat, the idea of paradox suggests the 'illogical' explanation true of Christian experience and witnessed to in the New Testament, that all is of 'I', and yet not 'I', but the Community of the Spirit; all is of the Spirit, and yet not the Spirit, but Christ; all is of Christ, and yet not Christ, but God; all is of God, and yet 'I' am 'I'.

However 'illogical', however 'irrational', this paradox seems to be a reflection of that sentiment expressed by St. Paul:

"O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God: How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!"

Chapter VI.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:
THE FORM OF MODERN DOCETISM AND THE PLACE OF 'PARADOX'
IN THE STRUGGLE WITH THE DOCETIC TENDENCY

I. The summary and restatement of the form taken by the tendency to docetism in the explanation of the miraculous in the life of Jesus, His temptations and sinlessness, His knowledge, and His resurrection.

What is purposed in this summary and restatement is a brief recapitulation of the preceding arguments to make clearer the form taken by modern docetism in the treatment of the various Christological subjects presented in the foregoing chapters. In the introductory chapter of the thesis it was pointed out that what originally was described as docetic, i.e., the idea that Jesus appeared as a phantom with a body impalpable and unreal, no longer exists. In its place there have been erected other explanations of the Incarnation which share with that original expression of docetism not the apparitional explanation of the 'body' of Jesus, but share in a general tendency to make the Incarnation seem unreal. Therefore, the task of this summary is to show how these modern forms of docetism share with ancient docetism the failure to express full the fact that the Word became flesh, that He was made man, that He was made to be sin, and so limit God and make Him conform to certain pre-conceived ideas about the form and structure of the Universe.

a. The form of the docetic tendency in the treatment of the miraculous.

There are two attitudes towards the miraculous which may invite a docetic explanation. One is that explanation of miracle in terms of natural and supernatural law. This view, as it is variously expressed in Chapter II, holds that there are certain fixed laws which govern existence in this life. These laws are divided into natural law and that higher law called supernatural which can be brought into force when the occasion demands it. These levels of law are separated from each other by a barrier on one side of which exists the natural law which is sufficient to cover the usual circumstances of natural life, and on the other side is the supernatural law which is invoked when the unusual in life demands it. According to this view it is through supernatural law that God acts in miracles. Thus, miracle is the sudden, momentary application of supernatural law to an otherwise natural situation. Through the sudden incursion of God this natural situation becomes unnatural for the moment; it becomes supernatural.

This view of miracle implies that Jesus appeared to those who knew Him to be existing in a natural situation, but because of the indwelling of divinity, what appeared to be natural was in fact supernatural and had at hand the power of a realm which comes into contact with the natural realm only at the will of a divine, or supernatural creature. If what was seen of Christ was only the appearance of life lived according to natural law but was in fact life lived according to supernatural law, the Incarnation was not incarnation at all, but only appearance, and Christ was unique solely because His

divinity made accessible to Him that supernatural power unavailable to men who, bound by their 'natural' state, must live according to natural law.

This is an extreme expression of the ultimate result of the division of the universe into realms natural and spiritual, but there are less sensational expression of it which have at their roots some form of causal mechanistic determinism which limits God and without intending to do so limits the Incarnation by implication, for to limit God, is to limit the Incarnation. These arguments which follow the causal determinism pattern express a tendency towards docetism thus:

If there is a natural law by which the natural life is ordered in a mechanistic, causal determinism, then there are vast areas of life which will 'run' if just let alone — there are activities of man which are solely natural and are efficient and effective as natural activities, and carry out their functions without the presence of the 'spiritual'. This is, however, to hold that there are areas of life which can get on without God, and so to hold that God is unnecessary is to exclude Him. But the whole point of an incarnational faith is that God is everywhere, at all times, and with unlimited power present right within, and yet distinct from, the so-called natural areas of life. Because God was in Christ in the Word made flesh it is certain that He is excluded from no area of life. If the view is maintained that the natural is independent of God, i.e., independent in the sense that God created the natural order and established the natural law by which it now continues as <u>autonomous</u>, then either the 'natural' in the Incarnate Son of God was His humanity which was untouched by His divinity which

operated only within the supernatural sphere, or His humanity and divinity were both supernatural and His life was not really that of God in the flesh but was simply a revelation of God, as if the supernatural assumed natural form in order to impart, for example, saving knowledge to those unable to cross the natural-supernatural barrier, or His life was completely natural except at those times when He exhibited miraculous or supernatural power.

The second attitude toward the miraculous which may invite a docetic explanation of it is that which considers miracle as sign. In the life of Jesus, the miraculous was never merely the unusual, although a legal determinism according to law would make it seem so, but was the power of God applied at a particular time, to a particular situation, and for a particular purpose which was within the will of God. Thus miracles are pure event, and are also sign. They are occurrences with entirely local significance and at the same time are signs of the activity of God ever present in His world.

But it is possible to place too much emphasis upon miracle as sign and so theologize miracle that it becomes revelation alone with no immediate significance. It was suggested in the chapter on miracles that to reduce them to sign was to make them appear unreal except as attestations of the nature of the person of Christ. It was shown how it is possible to divorce the sign from the event and so separate the historic element of the faith from the dogmatic element. When this happens, not only is the historical quality of the Faith which is founded upon an Event reduced, but the miracle itself, through the interpretation of the miracle-story, is treated docetically as pure

symbol with no historic relevance -- it becomes the symbol or sign which mediates a theological truth and ceased to be the narrative of an event which once had existential significance.

Not only are miracle and miracle-story described docetically by this explanation in terms of sign alone, but the power of God is limited for this present day, for if miracle pointed to or attested some thing which is now accepted, if it pointed to the person of Christ who was finally attested by the Resurrection and Ascension, then the miraculous no longer has a purpose and will not occur in this day in which there is no novel revelation to attest. Such a point of view carries two important implications: one, the power of God is limited for this age in which there is no need for attestation to Christ by miracle; and, two, the Incarnation has ceased to have significance for this age. As the miracles of the Gospels were purely signs pointing to Christ, He whose person was the greatest of miracles was a sign pointing to God the Father. His work on earth is complete; He glorified the Father. Therefore, His presence is no longer necessary. His death, Resurrection, and Ascension saw the end of the Incarnation, just as it saw the end of miracle.

In summary, these are the two forms of the docetic tendency which must be guarded against: one, a causal, mechanistic, deterministic explanation of miracle in terms of law which limits the free activity of God; and two, a treatment of miracle solely as sign or revelation which passes by the immediate significance of the miraculous event itself.

b. The form of the docetic tendency in the treatment of the temptations and sinlessness of Jesus.

Here, again, there are two forms taken by the struggle with docetism in the explanation of the temptations and sinlessness. One is the tendency towards determinism similar to that present in certain attitudes towards miracles. This determinism destroys the reality of the temptations and the free quality of sinlessness. The other form is found in a tendency to portray Jesus as an autonomous being around whom the Christian faith is centred.

The first form of the docetic tendency in the treatment of the temptations and sinlessness of Jesus is relatively simple. It follows the same argument as the summary of the treatment of the miraculous and relies upon a determinism which discounts the human nature of Jesus and overlooks the possibility of His sinlessness having occurred as the result of a freely made response to His Father. According to this determinism, Jesus possessed the inherent inability to sin as the result of various causes and characteristics of the Incarnation pointed out in Chapter III. The fact that He was divine, or born of a virgin, or was the highest point in the moral evolution of man, made it impossible that He should sin. Therefore, sin had no meaning for Him. Such an argument reduces the sinlessness of Jesus to no more significance than some one of His physical characteristics. It becomes a negative concept -- Jesus committed no sinful act -- rather than a description of the positive perfect relation of Jesus to the Father. Again, the person of Jesus when described in static,

deterministic terms becomes unreal, and His life as one of movement, relationship, and active response is overlooked in a tendency towards docetism.

This form of the discussion of the temptations and sinlessness of Jesus which has to do with the relationship between His humanity and divinity ultimately presents a humanity in Jesus completely determined by the controlling divinity. The humanity is, as it were, kept in check by the divinity. There is, however, another form of the tendency towards docetism in this discussion of the temptations and sinlessness which expresses itself not so much in its analysis of the person and Nature of Jesus in relation to the humanity of other men, but in the analysis of the relation of Jesus to God.

In Chapter III there are pointed out several explanations of the temptations and sinlessness of Jesus which orient their arguments around the person of Jesus, e.g., they hold that He was conscious of His Messiahship, that He met evil with His perfect moral judgment, that He overcame the enticement to sin through what He was. These Jesus-oriented arguments tend to portray Him as the self-confident, self-conscious, self-righteous (in the sense that He was righteous because of the inherent nature of His person), divine Being. They say in effect, "Good teacher..."; they are subject to the reply of Jesus, "No one is good but God alone...".

In contrast to this view about His person is His own witness to the Father. He made the bold claims about Himself that cost Him His life, but He made them exclusively relative to His Father's will. No one has ever been able to say 'I am the Way and the Truth and the

Life...All things have been delivered unto me...Come unto me...I am the bread of life...the water I shall give him will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life'. These are the claims of the Son of God, but He made them not to laud Himself, or to display His power; He made them solely in relation to His Father. Jesus did not say that He was the Goal, the Absolute, the Immortality, but rather, that He was the Way to the Father, the Truth about the Father, and the Father's gift of eternal life. His rule over the world was delivered unto Him by the Father, and no one could come unto Him but those who had 'learned and heard from the Father', and who had been given to the Son by the Father.

When Christology is oriented Jesus-ward and not Father-ward, as Jesus Himself was 'oriented' so perfectly that He and the Father are One in a Oneness not of substantial quality, but a Oneness of will and works, Jesus becomes the autonomous object at the center of the Christian faith. Whenever this happens, it inevitably follows that Jesus, as the divine head of the cult, takes on proportions which He Himself denied — He becomes, as it has been pointed out, the entirely self-reliant, self-sufficient, self-confident creator of eternal life. This is to make the Christian faith Jesus-centered, which is contradictory to the witness of Jesus who lived a Father-centered life and would lead other men into a Father-centered life through Himself as the Son.

A Jesus-centered faith, in the above described sense, is not true to the Incarnation, for if Incarnation means anything more than what is contained in the metaphysical proposition that in Jesus the

'divine' was seen in 'human' form, it means that God was in Christ in a life of obedience, response, relationship, which took its whole meaning from the existence of God the Father. If the Incarnation is to be treated as God in the flesh living a human life, then the emphasis is not upon Jesus as very God, but upon Him as very God Incarnate. He was sent; He did not come as a divine being or demi-god who determined to walk the face of the earth in the form of man. That God so loved the world that He sent His Son -- that is the core of any explanation of the Incarnation which must be God-the-Father-centered before it can express the meaning and purpose of the Incarnation. When the Advent becomes a thing in itself, autonomous, self-explanatory, it ceases to convey the New Testament meaning of Incarnation, and in so far as it does this, it weakens force of that mysterious Event which is powerful not solely because Jesus was 'divine', but because He was divine as a dependent, obedient, human being.

These are the two forms of the docetic tendency peculiar to explanations of the temptations and sinlessness of Jesus. One describes Jesus impersonally and limits the dynamic, human-divine Life to one determined by inherent substance. The other form disregards the nature of the Incarnation as relative to God the Father by portraying Jesus as the absolutely autonomous Lord of a Jesus-centered religion, and in so doing tends to emphasize the divinity of Jesus and to minimize His humanity.

c. The form of the docetic tendency in the treatment of the limited knowledge of Jesus.

The analysis of current forms of the discussion of the knowledge of Jesus was undertaken with the assumption that the Gospel portrait revealed something of the nature of His knowledge and the means by which He acquired that knowledge. In Chapter IV the idea that the knowledge of Jesus could be divided into two types, human and divine, with each type displaying itself at different times, was discarded, along with the idea that it is possible to catalogue the content of the knowledge of Jesus and draw a line at that point where it becomes divine and supernatural and departs from ordinary human knowledge. Chapter IV concluded with the idea that the knowledge of Jesus was human and divine in the sense that everything Jesus knew He knew as God because He had in Him the mind of God as the result of His constant response of obedience and dependence in the gracious relationship of the Only Begotten Son to the Father. As Christians are urged to have in them the mind of Christ, so the Son had in Him the mind of the Father, which was yet the mind of the Son and no docetic displacement of His human mind by a 'divine' mind.

These conclusions came out of the analysis of those discussions of the limited knowledge of Jesus which relied upon the divine and human distinctions and set limitation and omniscience at opposite poles, as if the divine could not be limited, but the human, which existed at the other pole, could be limited and indeed was limited as a part of its very nature. In summary, this is the same form in which the docetic tendency appears in the discussions both of miracle and temptation and

sinlessness.

The form of the docetic tendency in the study of the limited knowledge of Jesus appears thus: His knowledge as human was limited because of the fact that He was human; limitation is of the nature of humanity. His knowledge as divine was unlimited because of the fact that He was divine; omniscience is of the nature of divinity. Therefore, both His limitations and His omniscience are determined by His two natures and are to be observed each in the area of His life to which it is peculiar. When Jesus is 'knowing' as divine, He is not subject to the laws of human knowledge; when He is 'knowing' as human, He is not subject to the laws of divine knowledge.

This explanation which restricts His limitations in knowledge to His humanity tends toward a docetic view of His person in that it: 1) holds that when He was expressing divine knowledge, it was not human knowledge, and, therefore, He was at that time, in so far as His human knowledge was concerned, existing only as divine; and 2), it denies Him that freedom of personality which is necessary if Jesus is to be thought of as more than the result of mechanical laws which cause Him to be this and know that according to which of His two natures predominates at the time of His act of knowing.

This argument which exhibits the docetic tendency in the study of the limited knowledge of Jesus is an exaggeration of the several arguments which appear in Chapter IV, section II, a, where current forms of the discussion of the knowledge of Jesus in terms of 'substance' are given, e.g., according to the categories human-divine, limitation-omniscience. This is not to imply that the two-natures description

of His person is invalid, but only to point out that it is conducive to a docetic view of Christ when His person is described as determined by His two natures rather than His two-natures determined and described by His person, the revelation of which existed prior to the two-natures definition of His person. The two-natures argument can play a helpful role in the description of the person of Jesus as human and divine, especially when it is augmented, and safeguarded from determinism by an idea such as that of paradox, which appears below in sections II and III.

d. The form of the docetic tendency in the treatment of the Resurrection of Jesus.

Chapter V of the thesis was written on the assumption, supported by the argument which endeavours to point out the bearing of the Resurrection upon the tendency towards docetism, that the terminology of docetism could be applied to the Resurrection, and that while this terminology departed so far from the original use of docetic, those tendencies which invite a docetic point of view could apply to resurrection as well as to life prior to death. Those tendencies apply in three ways to the discussion of the Resurrection of Jesus:

1) In the general discussion of the Resurrection, the docetic tendency is present in that argument which holds that the Resurrection occurred because Jesus was divine, and, similarly, in that argument which holds that the Resurrection occurred because of the unique nature and quality of the life which preceded the death of Jesus.

2) In the discussion of the Resurrection Body, a docetic tendency appears in some of the arguments against a bodily resurrection. The presence of the tendency towards a docetic point of view of the body is not indicated simply by whether or not a theologian affirms or disaffirms the resurrection of the material body of flesh and blood, but in the argument he uses to sustain his position. In the original form of docetism the Incarnation was denied because of a particular view of the evil nature of matter; this original docetism denied the transforming effectiveness of God's free activity within matter. In this present day, this characteristic of the docetic tendency is perpetuated by the argument which denies a material resurrection because of the fact that the body is body and not spirit. That is to say, there is a gulf fixed between what is bodily and what is spiritual, and because the body is material, it is outside the realm in which spiritual activity takes place. Thus God's activity within the realm of the material is limited.

There is a second form of docetic tendency which was pointed out in Chapter V in which the body is treated purely as organ of the spirit, or as the function of the spirit in a 'form' assumed by the spirit. This argument implies not only that the body is under the control of the spirit as a machine is under the control of its operator, but that the body is merely a 'form' of the spirit which lacks reality as a thing in itself.

3) The Ascension may be treated docetically if it is described as the predetermined result of the 'divinity' which continued apart from the humanity as the really controlling factor in the life of Christ.

If this argument is carried through, the Ascension becomes an act of a novel nature for the humanity of Christ, but a return to a familiar and well-remembered existence in the divine consciousness of Christ.

The common characteristic of 1), 2), and 3) is this: in each section the determining factor is the divinity of Christ -- because Christ was divine, this and this is true of Him. The humanity of Christ is the forgotten factor in the emphasis upon His controlling divinity. The other expressions of what might become a form of docetism share in that quality of determinism which appears in 1) where the Resurrection is described as that event pre-determined by the quality of the life preceding it, in 2) where the body of the Resurrection of Jesus is described as necessarily immaterial because it is the body of a spiritual being, i.e., it is determined in form by the spiritual nature of the Resurrection, and in 3) where the Ascension is considered to be a novelty to the humanity of Jesus because of His human inability to know what He knew as divine.

e. <u>The common denominator in the struggle with the docetic tendency: 'The Great Divorce'</u>.

All of these tendencies towards docetism erect a barrier between the spiritual and the material and so limit God from acting within His world, or at most let Him act only when certain conditions -- divinity or perfection -- are present. Perhaps the common denominator between all form of the tendency towards docetism is this: The refusal to let God enter into His world and rule except in 'unusual' instances

when God is especially needed: or, expressed in terms of personal experience, the refusal to let faith and life exist as completely interrelated.

When this great divorce exists in theology, the result is a refusal to define God in terms of the world, and likewise, a refusal to define the world in terms of God. It is true that God cannot be defined in terms of the world, but the closest approximation of the definition of God man can state must be in terms of the world, for it is only in this worldly existence that man is confronted by God, knows God, and is known by God. He has no 'supernatural', or 'esoteric' information about God; the most supernatural revelation occurs in time, enters through a natural mind, can be related only in natural language, written only in natural figures, and printed only on natural materials. Indeed, God's <u>self</u>-definition was in terms of the world of flesh in the Incarnation.

However, although it be but a half-truth with many limitations that God can be defined in terms of the world, it is a whole truth that the world can properly be defined only in terms of God, for it takes its meaning from no other source. Docetism, however, claimed that the world does take its meaning from some other source, a source which is an evil demiurge in conflict with the good God. In the place of that demiurge has been substituted 'natural law' and those forms of determinism which reflect the causal mechanistic explanation of material existence.

When this 'great divorce' between the world and God is applied to the person of Jesus, one of two results must follow. Either He was living as a creature subject to the autonomous laws of nature and was

subject to all the determinism of the chain of causation into which His birth introduced Him, or He was living only in the form of the natural order, but was actually to be defined solely in terms of divinity.

If His person is defined solely in terms of divinity, then His truly human nature was merely an appearance, or was another part of His 'self' living in complete distinction from His divine and supernatural 'self', with a gulf fixed between these two selves which were divorced from each other by reason of the autonomous nature of each 'self'.

If, on the other hand, His person is defined solely in terms of the world, then He may be described as one adopted by God, or He may be described as having been a divine being who at the Incarnation entered into an entirely new mode of existence the end of which was the result of irrevocable laws of causation -- by the laws of causation which operate in a sinful world, the life of Jesus was bound to end in crucifixion; by the laws of causation which operate in a supernatural world, the 'death' of a divine being was bound to result in resurrection. If His life is defined solely in terms of the natural, then His resurrection is the sudden incursion of God to rescue from the inevitability of natural consequence.

When spirit and matter, soul and body, humanity and divinity, God and the world, are thought of as autonomous, self-contained orders, to be disturbed only when God decides to act in a supernatural way and for the moment to annul the 'great divorce', it is difficult, if not impossible, to present the Incarnation as an Act of God by which the Son was sent to dwell on earth as human and divine, as Man and God, in every manifestation of His being.

II. Conclusion: If the docetic tendency is largely the result of a separation of faith from life, of the divine from the human, of the spiritual from the material, in a deterministic explanation of the relationship of God to His Creation (or better, divorce from His Creation), then it can be avoided by the overthrow of that determinism and the substitution in its place of the idea of an active, responsive relationship between God and His Creation, between divinity and humanity, between spirit and matter. This relationship can be expressed in terms of 'paradox' which serve as helpful pointers to the ultimate revelation of the relationship of God to His Creation in the Incarnation.

a. The overthrow of determinism through an expanded view of miracle.

In Chapter II the docetic tendency likely to appear in a treatment of the miraculous was defined as having at its source a limited view of God which restricted His activity in conformance to certain 'rules and regulations'. The suggestion was made that through an expanding view of miracle the deterministic explanations by way of natural and supernatural law might be avoided. In this expanded view of miracle, the miraculous event is regarded not as the unusual, but the specific act of God which meets a specific situation. The miracle is an act of God, but it is His act not because He has brought unusual laws into play, but because it was His will that the act should happen. In a sense, every act of God is a miracle because there is no situation to which the will of God does not apply, and there is no situation which

if it appears not to be miraculous but contrary to God's will cannot become miraculous in so far as the only thing which stands in the way of its becoming miraculous is the sin of ignoring the will of God.

But this does not imply that God is so limited by man's sinful nature that He cannot miraculously recreate man. A miracle is a situation in which the impediment of sin is lacking, but this does not mean that if it were not for sin, all would be miraculous, for a miracle does not take place merely because of the absence of sin, but because of the presence of God and His will for a particular situation. If it were held that the miraculous is merely the absence of the sinful element, then miracle would become impersonal and once more be limited to 'divinity' and 'perfection' and special supernatural 'laws' which come into force when these qualities are present. But miracle is not the absence of something; it is the presence of God.

This is the contribution of the expanding view of miracle. Just as the physicists are on the fringe of a 'new' world of movement, response, and active relationship in their discovery of the behaviour of matter through atomic research, so the theologians counteract the determinism of natural and supernatural law, which is the theological form of the physicists' 'mechanical causation', by stressing the power of God personally, uniquely, individually available in every life-situation. Life in this world is not existence in subjection to imperishable law; it is existence in relation to imperishable God.

This expanded view of miracle treats God as unlimited and takes the Incarnation seriously. There is no supernatural reserve in the person of Jesus to be called into line as the action of the enemy

demands an extra thrust of power, for as human as well as divine Jesus had all the power of God available to Him at all times, just as He taught that as human, all men have the power of God available to them through faith. This power of God is not that supernatural 'extra' which is available through faith to be made use of according to the whim of man, but is that power available to meet every situation of life and to make the miraculous an everyday occurrence.

A situation in Acts 16:25ff. illustrates this expanded view of miracle. Paul and Silas are in prison; an earthquake occurs which opens the prison doors and loses the prisoners' shackles. Here is the unusual occurrence which would surely be termed miraculous according to the natural-supernatural law theory, for a natural situation was invaded. It is possible to interpret the earthquake as a special act of God in which supernatural powers or 'laws' were brought to bear. According to this interpretation if the earthquake would have taken place without a special act of God causing it, and if the strata under the earth's surface would have shifted by reason of natural causation, the occurrence would not be labelled miraculous. But St. Paul does not behave according to this legal logic. He does not take advantage of the unusual to secure his own release, but rather, pursues his ministry to the jailor and his household, to his fellow prisoners, and, perhaps, acts according to his final objective of getting to Rome. The earthquake is made very little of in the narrative; whoever wrote it concurred with St. Paul's view. The whole occurrence takes its miraculous quality not from the 'unusual' but from the 'unusual' set in the entire context of the will of God for St. Paul. Miracle is not merely

the unusual; it is the will of God being manifest in a particular situation and has to do not with the suspension of laws, but with individual people who are living a life of response to God, i.e., people who would define themselves in terms of God.

b. The overthrow of determinism through the use of the idea of 'paradox'.

In the foregoing chapters the idea of paradox has frequently appeared as a pointer towards the solution of the many problems which face a Christology which is willing to describe Jesus neither as an 'appearance' of humanity under the control of divinity nor as an entirely self-determining and autonomous being, but as a real person, human and divine in every manifestation of His being. This idea of paradox suffers from two misconceptions of the meaning of paradox as it is used in a Christological discussion; therefore, before a summary of the use of the idea in the foregoing chapter is begun, it is necessary to define paradox and so endeavour to avoid these misconceptions about it.

1) Misconceptions about the meaning of paradox.

(a) The idea of paradox is an escape from Christological issues.

One charge against the use of paradox is that it solves nothing and serves only as an escape from Christological problems. If paradox were to mean something like this: The problems at the root of Christology, e.g., the existence together of humanity and divinity in one person, are great mysteries to be received in faith but not analysed

by the intellect; or the problems of Christology must be considered insolvable because of the limited knowledge of man who must wait until he sees 'face to face' to understand the meaning of Christ; or, ultimately all problems of Christology are paradoxical and therefore their discussion is but arid play with contradictory words: then paradox would indeed be open to the charge of merely being an escape from pressing issues, and more than an escape, it would be a very docetic escape, for according to these examples given the issues of the Faith are meaningful only to part of man and are excluded from his intellectual activity. In other words, God is limited to communication with only a part of man and the Faith does not claim the devotion of the whole man.

That paradox is not an escape is apparent from the way it is introduced into the Christology of D.M. Baillie. He denies that the idea of paradox is a theological mistake through which escape from pressing problems is sought; the mistake, according to him, consists not in asserting the idea of paradox in the doctrine of the Incarnation, "but to miss the paradox everywhere else".[1] He writes of the "constant and ubiquitous paradox" which reaches its peak in the supreme paradox of the Incarnation and is the "all-round paradox of our Christian faith and experience". Thus paradox becomes a description of the very problem of life, i.e., existence in relation to God in which God is all-powerful, in which all is of God, and yet the 'I' of the individual remains

---

[1] D.M. Baillie, God Was In Christ, page 107.

distinct, willing, obeying, and too often rebelling, in a world which is the world and is not God who made it. The question, What do we mean by saying that Jesus was both God and Man?, asks for an answer which is more than a description of the person of Jesus; it asks for light on, not only the mysterium Christi, but for light on the mysterium entis. This can hardly be charged as escapist.

(b) The idea of paradox as a resolution of the tension between what is divine and what is human.

Another misconception is that the idea of paradox is a help towards resolving the tension between the human and the divine. This meaning is attached to the idea of paradox only as the result of the mistaken supposition that by setting two contradictory elements side by side and stating that they are mysteriously interactive and related can the heretofore existing tension between them be reduced. The idea of paradox is completely misunderstood when it is thought to mean this, and it is misunderstood on two counts.

First, the idea of paradox does not set humanity and divinity, or matter and spirit, or the world and God, side by side as mysteriously related but contradictory. The original Docetae did this when they described the 'tension' which existed between the evil creative demiurge and the good God. By the use of the idea of paradox, it is not intended to perpetuate this error.

Second, the idea of paradox does not set humanity and divinity side by side as two separate entitites. That Jesus was both God and Man means that His divinity and humanity were distinct one from the other,

but distinct neither in the sense of being separable nor existing in tension. It has been pointed out in each of the foregoing chapters what tendency is likely to emerge when the person of Jesus is treated as consisting of two separable properties, divine and human, rather than as consisting of two natures in one indivisible person.

2) Paradox defined and applied to the life of Christ.

Although the theological works may dispute about what is and what is not a real paradox of the faith, the dictionaries are in agreement that a paradox is an assertion of what seems contradictory to common sense, but may be true in fact. That Jesus was God and Man is a statement which appalls the world's common sense, defies theological explanation, and which is true and reflects both the paradoxical nature of the life of Christ and the paradoxical nature of the life of the Christian.

The idea of paradox endeavours to take as seriously as it is possible both the humanity and the divinity of Jesus. It asserts without any reservations that He is both God and Man. As the idea of paradox is applied to His life, it is an aid in avoiding the over-emphasis upon either of His natures which would lead to a docetic or an adoptionist view of His person; as the idea of paradox is applied to the life of the Christian, it is an aid in avoiding either an antinomian or pelagian view of Christian experience.

(a) The paradox in Christ's miracles.

The miracles of Jesus were the result solely of the power of God; the miracles were the result solely of the human faith of Jesus. In the face of these two seemingly contradictory assertions it is stated that the miracles could have taken place in the absence of neither, for together they are an expression of the two natures of the one person of Jesus. If the miracles are held to be the result of the power of God alone, that is, as if they resulted exclusively from the 'divine' in the person of Jesus, then an over-emphasis upon the divinity invites a lapse into that docetic tendency which fails to take fully into account the humanity of Jesus. It has previously been pointed out how a view which explains the miracles of the Gospels in terms of the divinity of the person of Jesus is symptomatic of a docetic view of the relation of God to His world. Paradox endeavours to explain miracle not as the pre-determined result bound to take place when divine power enters in to upset the laws of nature, but as the result of that mysterious yet real interaction between divinity and humanity in obedience, response, dependence, which is summed up as a 'life of faith'.

(b) The paradox in the temptations and sinlessness of Jesus.

That Jesus was tested and proved in the creative experience of temptation throughout His life may imply that He was less than perfect, if by perfect is meant merely a static state, and definitely implies that it was necessary for Him to learn and be disciplined both in

preparation for and in carrying out the Mission of redemption upon which He had been sent by the Father. To assert that He was the divine Son of God seems to contradict these statements, for divinity usually implies perfection in all things, and in these two statements which appear to be contradictory but are yet true lies the paradox.

It is probably easier to misinterpret the meaning of paradox in relation to the temptations and sinlessness than in relation to any other area of His life. One misinterpretation is to state the paradox as if it existed between the statement that Jesus was tempted and sinless the statement that He was divine. But this is not the paradox, for there is no contradiction between real temptation and real sinlessness and divinity when temptation is understood not in its corrupted sense of enticement to sin, but in its original sense of testing, trying, and proving, and when sinlessness means not so much the absence of sins — if it meant this alone, it would have no meaning when applied to the life of a divine person — but the presence of that quality of obedience and dependence in which sins are impossible of commission. It might be argued that the Wilderness Temptations of Jesus were narrated as if they were an enticement to sin made by the devil. But they were not 'enticement to sin' made by him, but were his proving, testing, and trying in an endeavour to fit Jesus for the service of Satan and the carrying out of a Satanic mission. By the response Jesus made to this situation these 'enticements' were transformed into a creative experience which better fitted Him for service to His Father. Perhaps the paradox lies in the fact of God making use of a situation 'created' by the devil.

If the fact that the divine Son of God who could not sin was yet tried, tested, and proved in experience the results of which were not pre-determined or mechanically caused by His divinity but were the results of an active, responsive relationship with the Father, a relationship of grace, the outcome of which could not be sin, then the paradox present in the temptations of Jesus is another expression of the supreme paradox, that Jesus was both God and Man.

(c) The paradox in the knowledge of Jesus.

Here the paradox takes this form: Jesus knew as God everything He did know; Jesus knew as man, and therefore did not know all things.

In Chapter IV it was pointed out that there is a sense in which omniscience and limitation are not contradictory terms, and that it is possible to state that Jesus was both limited in knowledge and yet knew as God knows. That limitation and omniscience occurred in one person is not the paradoxical element in the knowledge of Jesus unless it is docetically held that since Jesus was divine, He must know all things, and if He were limited, it would be a limitation peculiar only to His human nature. In place of this mistaken paradox it was suggested that Jesus as divine and human looked upon the world and saw and reacted to it as God; He was evil and met it with the love and compassion of God as well as with the judgment of God. In this sense did He know all that He knew as God, and yet did not know all that had ever been known in His day, or that ever shall be known.

(d) The paradox in the Resurrection of Jesus.

It was pointed out in Chapter V that the paradox in the Resurrection of Jesus did not result from the so-called tension between the divine and the human in which a resurrection of divinity is credible, but a resurrection of humanity incredible. The paradox of the Resurrection exists in the relationship of Jesus to God: The Resurrection is understandable only as the result of a perfect life lived by the Son of God, and yet the Resurrection is not an act of the Son but is an act of the Father who raised Him up. The paradox expressed in the chapter on the Resurrection can be stated thus: the Resurrection was all of the Father; the Resurrection was all of the Son. In this way it is possible to avoid a deterministic explanation of the Resurrection as the result of Christ's divinity, and at the same time to maintain the importance of His human and divine life lived prior to His death. When this paradoxical element in the Resurrection is safeguarded, it is less likely that the Resurrection as a result of Christ's divinity will be explained in terms of disincarnation as if the divinity in this final episode 'overwhelmed' the humanity of Jesus. When it is asserted that the Resurrection was an act of the Father, it is perhaps easier to conceive of it as a Resurrection of the whole person of Jesus. Thus the paradox in the Resurrection serves as a further pointer towards an understanding of the Incarnation.

3) Summary of the relationship of the idea of paradox to the docetic tendency.

There are three central paradoxes which have been pointed out in the previous sections of this Conclusion. They are: one, the paradoxical life of Jesus who was God and Man; two, the paradoxical relation of God the Son to God the Father as revealed in the witness of Jesus to the Father in which all was of the Father, and yet the Father and the Son are one; and three, the paradoxical relationship of God to the world in which the world can be defined only in terms of God and is yet the world and is not God. Each of these paradoxes is related in its own way to the docetic tendency. Together they form a check against this tendency, for so long as this paradoxical element in the Faith is maintained, to over-stress either side of the paradox is not possible.

The paradox of the life of Jesus restrains a Christology from developing its argument in terms only of the divinity of Jesus and thus explaining the 'unusual' in His life solely by it, and forces a Christology to take seriously into account the fact that Jesus was Man as well as God. The paradox of the relation of the Son to the Father restrains an exposition of the Christian faith from becoming so Jesus-oriented as to miss the Father-centered quality of the faith of Jesus Himself. When this Jesus-orientation occurs, it is possible for the Faith to become, as it were, a Jesus-cult which in its zeal to assert the divinity of the cult leader sentimentally describes Jesus as a 'third something', which description conforms neither to the nature of humanity nor of God but

describes Him as a divine demi-god who walked the earth in the form of man. Not only does the idea of paradox restrain this one sided emphasis on the Person of Jesus, but it at the same time asserts and emphasizes Jesus, the Christ, God Incarnate, as the center of the Faith as the Way, Truth, and Life — the Way to the Father, the Truth about the Father, and the Life given from the Father.

The Third paradox, or the relation of God to the world and the world to God, can be stated only because there exists that greater paradox of the Incarnation, for without that, the relationship of God to the world in the Christian sense could not be stated. Foreshadowed in Old Testament, Psalms and Prophets and fulfilled in the New is the truth that the world has meaning only in relation to God and is entirely dependent upon God, and yet, when it is defined in terms of God and orders itself in obedient dependence upon God, then it becomes neither slave of God nor an automaton of God, but truly becomes real and meaningful. Relative to the docetic tendency this paradox points out that it is not only possible to 'see' God and yet live, but it is possible to live and to perceive reality only by first 'seeing' God. When the paradox is forgotten and God and the world are neatly separated into their respective realms of activity, the activity of God in the world loses any sense of reality and is described solely in terms of the 'unusual' much in the same way that the early Docetae could describe the activity of God in the Incarnation as unreal and apparitional, for they could not apprehend the paradox of God Himself meeting men personally in the world. However, the refusal to recognize the paradoxical

relationship of God to His world and the resulting possibility of a lapse into some form of the docetic tendency, do not result in the first place from a mistaken view about the Christian faith. In Chapter II where this paradox is pointed out in relation to miracles, it is clear that the mistake does not lie primarily in describing the world from a wrong understanding of the Faith, but rather lies in bringing to the Faith certain preconceived ideas about the nature of the world and God and then forcing the Faith into these ready made moulds. It is clear that the early forms of docetism were the result of the concept that matter was evil and, therefore, divinity could not enter into material existence. It is likewise possible in this modern age to press the Faith into current moulds. Probably the only safeguard against this agelong tendency is to reaffirm in every age that the world cannot be defined in terms of the world, but must take its meaning from God. This 'meaning from God' is revealed in the Incarnation and therefore it is to the world the Christian goes with preconceived ideas about the world; he may not undertake to define the person of Christ with preconceived ideas 'revealed' to him by the world unless he is also willing to fall into a similar error to those originated in the past by one of the many groups who have tried to define the person of Christ so as to 'fit' a preconceived idea of the nature of the world and the relation of God to it.

Bibliography I: An Introduction to the Study of the Struggle with the docetic tendency in Twentieth Century British Christology.

Bethune-Baker, J.F., An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine; London, Methuen, 7th ed., 1942.

Bull, Bishop, The Opinion of the Catholic Church for the First Three Centuries; London, Rivington, 1825.

Burton, E., The Heresies of the Apostolic Age; London, Rivington, 1829.

Dorner, J.A., The Person of Christ, E.T. by D.W. Simon; Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, IV Vols., 1861.

Fairbairn, A.M., The Place of Christ in Modern Theology; London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1894.

Fortesque, A., "Docetism", Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Edited by J. Hastings Vol. IV; Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, XIII Vols., 1912.

Harnack, A., History of Dogma, Vol. I, E.T. by N. Buchanan; London, Williams & Norgate, 3rd Ed., VII Vols., 1894.

Headlam, A.C., Christian Theology: The Doctrine of God; Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1934.

James, M.R., The Apocryphal New Testament; Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1924.

Mackintosh, H.R., The Person of Jesus Christ; Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1912.

, Types of Modern Theology; London, Nisbet, 1937.

Mansel, H.L., The Gnostic Heresies of the First and Second Centuries, Edited by Lightfoot; London, John Murray, 1875.

Mead, G.R.S., Fragments of a Faith Forgotten; London, Theosophical Publishing Society, 1900.

Mozley, J.K., Some Tendencies in British Theology; London, S.P.C.K., 1951.

Neander, A., General History of the Christian Religion and Church, Revised by A.J.W. Morrison, Vol. I; London Bohn, New edition, 1853.

Orr, James, The Progress of Dogma; London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1901.

Ottley, R.L., The Doctrine of the Incarnation; London, Methuen, 2nd ed., 1902.

Peake, A.S., et al, An Outline of Christianity, Edited by A.S. Peake, R.G. Parsons, Vols. I and II; London, Waverly Book Co., V Vols., 1926.

Raven, C.E., Apollinarianism; Cambridge, University Press, 1923.

Roberts, A., Donaldson, J., Ante-Nicene Christian Library: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325; Edinburgh T. & T. Clark, 1870.

Sanday, Wm., Christologies Ancient and Modern; Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1910.

, The Gospel in the Second Century; London, Macmillan, 1876.

Smith, W., Wace, H., The Dictionary of Christian Biography; London, John Murray, 1877.

Swete, H.B., The Akhmim Fragment of the Apocryphal Gospel of St. Peter; London, Macmillan, 1893.

Tollington, R.B., Clement of Alexandria; London, Williams & Norgate, 1914.

Tyrell, G., et al, Jesus or Christ?: The Hibbert Journal Supplement 1909; Edited by L.P. Jacks; London, Williams & Norgate, 1909.

Bibliography II: Material for a study of the struggle with the docetic tendency in Twentieth Century British Christology.

Baillie, D.M., God Was In Christ; London, Faber & Faber, 1948.

Brooke, A.E., The Johannine Epistles (International Critical Commentary); Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1912.

Bruce, A.B., The Humiliation of Christ; London, Hamilton, 2nd Ed., 1881.

, Apologetics; Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1909.

Burkitt, F.C., Jesus Christ; London, Blackie & Son, 1932.

Cadoux, C.J., The Historic Mission of Jesus; London, Lutterworth, 1941.

Cairns, D.S., The Faith That Rebels; London, S.C.M., 3rd (Revised) ed., 1928.

Campbell, R.J., The New Theology; London, Chapman & Hall, 1907.

Cave, S., et al., The Christian Faith, Edited by W.R. Matthews; London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1936.

Clark, H.W., The Cross and the Eternal Order; London, Lutterworth, 1943.

Cobb, W.F., Mysticism and the Creed; London, Macmillan, 1914.

Cooke, R.J., The Incarnation and Recent Criticism; London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1907.

Creed, J.M., The Divinity of Jesus Christ; Cambridge, University Press, 1938.

Denney, J., The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation; London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1919.

, The Death of Christ; London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1902.

Diggle, J.W., Death and the After-Life; London, Williams & Norgate, 1918.

Dodd, C.H., The Johannine Epistles; London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1946.

Dougall, Lily, "God in Action", The Spirit, Edited by B.H. Streeter; London, Macmillan, 1935.

Dow, John, Jesus and the Human Conflict; London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1927.

Drummond, James, Studies in Christian Doctrine; London, Philip Green, 1908.

Drummond, R.J., The Relation of the Apostolic Teaching to the Teaching of Christ; Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1900.

Duncan, G.S., Jesus, Son of Man; London, Nisbet, 1947.

, "The Historical Value of the Gospels", The Christian Faith, Edited by W.R. Matthews; London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1936.

Farrer, A.M., The Glass of Vision; London, Dacre Press, 1948.

Forrest, D.W., The Authority of Christ; Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1906.

Forsyth, P.T., This Life and the Next; London, Macmillan, 1918.

, The Cruciality of the Cross; London, Independent Press, Revised Ed., 1948.

, The Work of Christ; London, Independent Press, Revised Ed., 1946.

Galloway, A.D., The Cosmic Christ; London, Nisbet, 1951.

Gardner, Percy, A Historic View of the New Testament; London, A. & C. Black, 1901.

Garvie, A.E., A Handbook of Christian Apologetics; London, Duckworth, 1913.

Gore, Charles, Dissertations on Subjects Connected with the Incarnation; London, John Murray, 2nd ed., 1896.

, Belief in Christ; London, John Murray, 1922.

Headlam, A.C., The Miracles of the New Testament; London, John Murray, 1914.

, The Life and Teaching of Jesus; The Christ; London, John Murray, 1923.

, Christian Theology: The Doctrine of God; Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1934.

Hodgson, Leonard, And Was Made Man; London, Longmans, Green, 1933.

, "The Incarnation", Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation, Edited by A.E.J. Rawlinson; London, Longmans, Green, 2nd ed., 1932.

, "The Knowledge of Christ Incarnate", A New Commentary on Holy Scripture, Edited by Charles Gore, H.L. Goudge, A. Guillame; London, S.P.C.K., 1928.

Hogg, A.G., Redemption from this World; Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1922.

Hoskyns, E.C., The Fourth Gospel, Edited by N. Davey; London, Faber & Faber, 2nd ed., (revised), 1947.

Hoskyns, E.C., Davey, N., The Riddle of the New Testament; London, Faber & Faber, 1931.

Hunter, A.M., Interpreting the New Testament; London, S.C.M., 1951.

, The Work and Words of Jesus; London, S.C.M., 1950.

Illingworth, J.R., The Gospel Miracles; London, Macmillan, 1915.

Inge, W.R., "The Person of Christ", Contentio Veritatis; London, John Murray, 2nd (Cheap) Ed., 1907.

Knight, H.J.C., The Temptations of Our Lord; London, Longmans, Green, 1907.

Lake, K., The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ; London, Williams & Norgate, 1907.

Lawton, J.S., Conflict in Christology; London, S.P.C.K., 1947.

Macaulay, A.B., The Death of Jesus; London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1938.

Mackinnon, James, The Historic Jesus, Longmans, Green, 1931.

Mackintosh, H.R., Types of Modern Theology; London, Nisbet, 1937.

, "The Name of Jesus", Sub Corona, Edited by H. Cowan, J. Hastings; Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1916.

Mackintosh, R., Christianity and Sin; London, Duckworth, 1913.

Major, H.D.A., Manson, T.W., Wright, C.J., The Mission and Message of Jesus; London, Ivor, Nicholson & Watson, 1937.

Manson, William, Jesus the Messiah; London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1943.

, The Epistle to the Hebrews; London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1951.

Martin, A.D., The Holiness of Jesus; London, Allen & Unwin, 1934.

Mascall, E.L., Christ, the Christian, and the Church; London, Longmans, Green, 1946.

Menzies, Allan, The Earliest Gospel; London, Macmillan, 1901.

Moberly, R.C., Problems and Principles, Edited by R.B. Rackham; London, John Murray, 1904.

, Atonement and Personality; London, John Murray, 1907.

, Christ our Life; London, John Murray, 1909.

Moffatt, James, The Historical New Testament; Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1901.

, The Theology of the Gospels; London, Duckworth, 1912.

Mozley, J.K., The Impassibility of God; Cambridge, University Press, 1926.

, The Doctrine of the Atonement; London, Duckworth, 1915.

Narborough, F.D.V., "The Christ", Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation, Edited by A.E.J. Rawlinson; London, Longmans, Green, 2nd ed. (cheaper reissue), 1932.

Newbigin, J.E.L., The Reunion of the Church; London, S.C.M., 1948.

Nock, A.D., "A Note on the Resurrection", Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation, Edited by A.E.J. Rawlinson; London, Longmans, Green, 2nd ed. (cheaper reissue), 1932.

Nolloth, C.F., The Person of Our Lord and Recent Thought; London, Macmillan, 1908.

Oman, John, Grace and Personality; Cambridge, University Press, 2nd ed., Revised, 1919.

Orr, J., The Resurrection of Jesus; London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1908.

Ottley, R.L., The Doctrine of the Incarnation; London, Methuen, 1902.

Peake, A.S., Christianity: Its Nature and Its Truth; London, Duckworth, 1908.

Quick, O.C., The Gospel of Divine Action; London, Nisbet, 1933.

, Essays in Orthodoxy; London, Macmillan, 1916.

, Liberalism, Modernism, and Tradition; London, Longmans, Green, 1922.

Rashdall, H., The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology; London, Macmillan, 1920.

Raven, C.E., Jesus and the Gospel of Love; London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1931.

, "The Secret of Christ", Christianity and the Crisis, Edited by P. Dearmer; London, Gollancz, 1933.

Rawlinson, A.E.J., The New Testament Doctrine of the Christ; London, Longmans, Green, 1926.

, "The Christian Belief in Christ", The Christian Faith, Edited by W.R. Matthews; London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1936.

Redlich, E.B., Form Criticism; London, Duckworth, 1939.

Relton, H.M., A Study in Christology; London, S.P.C.K., 1934.

Richardson, A., The Miracle-Stories of the Gospels; London, S.C.M., 1941.

Robinson, H.W., Redemption and Revelation; London, Nisbet, 1942.

Salmond, S.D.F., The Christian Doctrine of Immortality; Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 5th ed., 1903.

Sanday, William, Christologies Ancient and Modern; Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1910.

, Outlines of the Life of Christ; Edinburgh, T. &. T. Clark, 1905.

, The Life of Christ in Recent Research; New York, Oxford University Press, American Branch, 1908.

, Divine Overruling; Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1920.

, Criticism of the Fourth Gospel; Oxford, Clarendon Press,

, Studies in the Synoptic Problem; Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1911.

, Personality in Christ and in Ourselves; Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1911.

Sanday, William, Williams, N.P., Form and Content in the Christian Tradition; London, Longmans, Green, 1916.

Scott, E.F., The Kingdom and the Messiah; Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1911.

Selwyn, E.G., "The Resurrection", Essays Catholic and Critical, Edited by E.G. Selwyn; London, S.P.C.K., 3rd ed., 1929.

Simpson, W.J.S., The Resurrection and Modern Thought; London, Longmans, Green, 1911.

Stalker, J., The Christology of Jesus; London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1899.

Storr, V.F., Christianity and Immortality; London, Longmans, Green, 1918.

, The Divinity of Christ; London, Longmans, Green, 1919.

Streeter, B.H., "The Resurrection of the Dead", Immortality; London, Macmillan, 1917.

, "The Historic Christ", Foundations; London, Macmillan, 1913.

Swete, H.B., Studies in the Teaching of Our Lord; London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1903.

, The Gospel According to St. Mark; London, Macmillan, 1898.

, The Ascended Christ; London, Macmillan, 1910.

Taylor, V., The Formation of the Gospel Tradition; London, Macmillan, 1933.

, Jesus and His Sacrifice; London, Macmillan, 1937.

, The Atonement in New Testament Teaching; London, Epworth, 1940.

Temple, William, "The Divinity of Christ", Foundations; London, Macmillan, 1913.

Trench, R.C., Notes on The Miracles of Our Lord; London, Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1905.

Tyrell, G., Christianity at the Cross-Roads; London, Longmans, Green, 1910.

Tyrell, G. et al, Jesus or Christ?: Hibbert Journal Supplement 1909, Edited by L. P. Jacks; London, Williams & Norgate, 1909.

Whale, J.S., Christian Doctrine; Cambridge, University Press, 1950.

Williams, H.A., Jesus and the Resurrection; London, Longmans, Green, 1951.

Wright, C.J., Miracle in History and in Modern Thought; London, Constable, 1930.

Bibliography III: A background for the conclusions in Chapter VI.

Baillie, D.M., *God Was In Christ*; London, Faber & Faber, 1948.

Barth, Karl, *Credo*, E.T. by J.S. McNab; London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1936.

Brunner, Emil, *Man in Revolt*, E.T. by O. Wyon; London, Lutterworth Press, 1936.

Heim, Karl, *The Transformation of the Scientific World View*, E.T. by W.A. Whitehouse; London, S.C.M., 1953.

Lewis, C.S., *Miracles*; London, Bles, 1947.

, *The Great Divorce*; London, Bles, 1946.

Tillich, P.J., *The Protestant Era*, E.T. by J.L. Adams; London, Nisbet, 1951.